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Conferees gather to reform Kuyper's legacy

Peter Schuurman

PRINCETON, N.J. — One hundred years ago last week, Abraham Kuyper, Dutch statesman and theologian, delivered the 1898 "Stone Lectures" at Princeton Theological Seminary.

On February 25-27 this year a group of neo-Calvinist scholars gathered at Princeton to reflect on and re-form the legacy of Abraham Kuyper. The title of

the conference was "Religion, Pluralism, and Public Life: Abraham Kuyper's Legacy for the 21st Century."

The conference was co-sponsored by Princeton Theological Seminary, The Center for Public Justice in Washington, D.C., the Free University of Amsterdam and Calvin College of Grand Rapids, Mich. It featured five lectures from Yale philosopher

Nicolas Wolterstorff as well as five separate panels of scholars.

About 300 people attended, most of whom were university professors, although some clergy, students, and lay persons were also present.

There was some veneration of Kuyper's accomplishments as an editor, theologian, philosopher, prime minister and professor. But there was little hero worship, and much more sober reflection and critical evaluation of his legacy. One conferee suggested that there was little in-depth review of Kuyper's ideas; at the same time he found Wolterstorff too philosophical.

Wolterstorff's lectures, entitled "Citizens, Yet Aliens", focused on matters of political concern. In his lectures he made reference to Kuyper, early church documents and contemporary political philosophers. But rather than using the language of Kuyper or Dooyeweerd, Wolterstorff used a lexicon of his own devising.

Two passports

On the one hand, Wolterstorff paid tribute to the Kuyperian perspective. He said that, unlike Augustine's *City of God* or the Anabaptist view, the Kuyperian view of the Christian and the state is more nuanced.

Wolterstorff presented his own slant on this by referring to the Christian's social location as a "double duality," a paradox, wherein one is subject both to the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of the polity in which one lives.

"It's like having two passports in overlapping jurisdictions," he said. "When Christians speak of themselves

as 'aliens' or 'exiles' this double duality is lost."

Wolterstorff also commended Kuyper for providing a corrective to Calvin's view of the statesman as "deputy" of God. In

Don't knock rights

Wolterstorff took issue with those who disparage the rhetoric of "rights." Embedded in Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty, Wolterstorff said, is an understanding of human rights and liberties.

"Besides," he said rather sharply, "If there were no rights, no one would be morally wronged, and forgiveness would have no place.... Rights are grounded in the will of God, and



Nicholas Wolterstorff (l.) and J.B. Hulst discuss Calvin's attitude toward popular revolt. Inset: a Princeton Tiger guards a gate.

Seafarers' lives filled with problems

Two Montreal agencies help them cope



This family reunion of a seafarer (man in striped shirt) with his sister (left) after 15 years apart took place at the Seafarers Centre in Montreal recently.

Alan Doerksen

MONTREAL — The life of a seafarer on the high seas is not as romantic as some people might think. In fact, a seafarer's life is often filled with difficulties such as unpaid wages, poor living conditions and isolation

from family. But agencies like the Seafarers Centre in Montreal and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) are bringing to light these injustices and working to improve the lives of seafarers.

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News

Sober reflection, critical evaluation of Kuyper's legacy

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delineating the limits of government for all times and places. "But all must continue to forever talk about justice," he concluded in the final lecture.

Kuyper's clay feet

Wolterstorff did not have only praise for Kuyper, however. For one, Kuyper had a static, synchronic view of the rule of God. Instead, insisted Wolterstorff, the rule of God should be seen historically, as a narrative, something that develops and changes with time, as we see in the Bible from Old Testament Kingdom, to exile, return, and then the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

Wolterstorff asserted that Kuyper's legacy is both admirable and shameful, generating both enlightenment and embarrassment. Kuyper's notions of race and gender, and his extreme American and Dutch patriotism, are shameful, and "that is why I'm not a 'Kuyperian,'" confessed Wolterstorff. "All have clay feet," he mused, "and we must let some of what he said just sit, some of it must be repudiated and some



Elaine Botha, of Redeemer College, warned about relativism.

of it should be used to enter into conversation with others."

Kuyper's prejudices

Twenty panelists presented parts of their papers in between the Stone Lectures (to be published). Many took issue with Kuyper's prejudices. John Witte, a Calvin College graduate and law professor at Emory University, made Kuyper's American and Dutch patriotism clear, giving evidence from one of Kuyper's speeches in Grand Rapids: "America is destined in

the providence of God to become the most glorious and noble nation the world has ever seen. Some day its renown will eclipse the renown and splendor of Rome, Greece and older races." And Kuyper saw the source and strength of this greatness coming directly from none other than John Calvin.

Relativism reigns

Another panelist, Elaine Botha, formerly of South Africa and now academic vice-president at Redeemer College, while personally abhorring the abuses of sphere sovereignty, gave a warning. In our postmodern context all boundaries are imploding, she cautioned, and fragmentation and relativism reign. In this light, transparent, dynamic boundaries and order are the good gifts of God, broken but redeemed and interconnected in Jesus Christ.

While some complained that Wolterstorff "didn't give us enough to argue about," many were pleased with the outcome of the conference. Dr. James Skillen of the Center for Public Justice and one of the organizers of the conference, said the con-



Presentation of the first Abraham Kuyper Prize for Excellence in Reformed Theology and Public Life to Dr. G. Puchinger (seated). He has written 1,300 works on Kuyper and his legacy.

ference was the culmination of four years of planning. He was very happy with the turnout. "They haven't had this many people out for a Stone Lectures series in years," he said. "And they haven't had a Dutch Calvinist in since the 1930s."

On the final day, the Abraham Kuyper Prize for Excellence in

Reformed Theology and Public Life was presented to Dr. G. Puchinger of Amsterdam. Dr. Puchinger has over 1,300 publications to his name, a number of which are on the subject of Abraham Kuyper, including the recent *Abraham Kuyper: de jonge Kuyper* [the Young Kuyper] (1987).

Profound regrets voiced about Kuyper's prejudices

Peter Schuurman

PRINCETON, N.J. — Of the 300 persons present at the 100th anniversary of Abraham Kuyper's 1898 Stone Lectures, most were white, male, Christian Reformed/Presbyterian, Dutch/North American/South African. The 20 panelists, however, were more diverse. Five were women; three were black; one, a Jew; and at least one, a Catholic.

Such voices could not have spoken in Kuyper's time and they gave testimony to what the

legacy has meant to people such as blacks and women. Citing evidence from the Stone Lectures and other writings of Kuyper, they demonstrated a profound ambivalence towards the Kuyperian legacy.

Dr. Peter Paris condemned what he called the social Darwinist anthropology of Kuyper, which claims blacks to be an inferior race.

Another panelist, Dr. H. Russel Botman, a black South African, in his call to reform the

Kuyperian legacy, stated ironically that "Kuyper would not have invited me to this conference ... and while Kuyper himself does not have to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, his racist legacy does."

Dr. Mary Stewart-VanLeeuwen, while commending Kuyper for emphasizing "common grace" and the priesthood of all believers, explained how Kuyper had done the same thing with gender as he had done with race — namely, assigning people to different "spheres" according to their physical characteristics.

An important resolution

In response to the discrimination, oppression and murder that has been associated with the Kuyperian legacy, a resolution was drafted (spearheaded by Gerald Vandezande, John Suk, Peter Vandermeulen, Mary Stewart-VanLeeuwen, Nick Wolterstorff and Harry Fernhout). This resolution stated:

We, participants in the 1998 Kuyper Conference held at Princeton Theological Seminary, regard the legacy of



H. Russel Botman, of Univ. of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Abraham Kuyper as a rich resource for Christian reflection and cultural engagement today. However, we profoundly regret the limitation and shameful distortions of the Gospel present in aspects of Kuyper's writings. In particular, we acknowledge that Kuyper's understanding of race and ethnicity, gender and sex have resulted in much pain and suffering.

In prayerful dependence on God, we commit ourselves, in working with the Kuyperian legacy, to redress these wrongs,

and to engage in our academic and cultural callings in the spirit of the message and ministry of reconciliation which we share in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5)."

Kuyper not Savior

After one voice of disapproval, a show of hands passed the resolution. "After all," said Dr. Max Stackhouse, an ethics professor at Princeton Seminary, after mentioning similar resolutions in Roman Catholic circles (e.g., re: Galileo), "We have a Savior, and it's not Kuyper."

Commenting on the resolution later, Van Leeuwen said, "Sphere sovereignty was no doubt a well-intentioned response to the Industrial Revolution. But this resolution will mean a great deal to those who have been hurt. It will allow for dialogue in the future, and help make the Kuyperian legacy a dynamic tradition. Its short-sighted aspects will be given their proper historical place."

The task now remains to continue the reformation of Kuyper's legacy — to retrieve the positive, critique the negative and to robustly live out the pledge of the resolution.

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News

Agencies help seafarers legally, spiritually



Outside the Seafarers Centre in Montreal.

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The Seafarers Centre, a ministry of the Quinte and Eastern Canada classes of the Christian Reformed Church, offers seafarers "a home away from home, which many of them appreciate," says Grace Couperus. She and her husband, George, work as a host couple with the centre. Seafarers face many work-related difficulties and "usually it's us who finds out there's problems," she says.

Bridging the gap

Isolation is a difficulty faced by most seafarers. Sometimes they are unable to communicate with their families for long periods of time, which can cause anxiety on both sides.

Staff of the centre help bridge this gap by making long distance phone calls home on behalf of mariners. Although they sometimes get bad news from their families, mariners appreciate this service. The staff also lets mariners use the centre's address so that they can receive mail when they drop into port.

The centre's staff, who speak Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and French, spend time talking with and playing games with seafarers. Bibles are also available, free of charge, in 70 languages.

One of the biggest problems seafarers face is not getting paid. Ken Mohle, the centre's chaplain, has met some seafarers who haven't been paid for seven months. When he finds out, he notifies the ITF, which can use its legal clout to force ship

owners or captains to pay their crew.

"I feel it's part of the gospel to help out the less privileged," says Mohle.

When speaking to seafarers, he sometimes hears about miserable living conditions onboard ships. One ship he visited had "terrible fumes in the cabins. It smelled like diesel."

Mohle has also met crewmen who have been blatantly exploited by their superiors.

Jim Given, an inspector with the ITF, is often in touch with Mohle. In regard to solving the problems of seafarers, "we both have the same objectives," says Given, but the ITF approaches problems from a legal angle rather than a religious one.

"If something's morally wrong, it's usually legally wrong, too," asserts Given. "Thankfully, the chaplains will not turn their eye to an injustice."

Given is very appreciative of the Seafarers Centre. "I think their work's fantastic. They're invaluable," he says. He maintains that the centre saves some seafarers' lives every year through its work.

Recovering wages

"Seafarers are usually very reserved," notes Given. Because they see him as "an authority figure," they don't often open up to him about their problems. But many of them feel more free to discuss these with chaplains, he says. "Spiritually, they're the only outlet they have."

Of the problems Given addresses, "wages are a big one," he says. "Last year, we recovered \$2 million in [unpaid] wages." Often the ITF does this by forcing a ship to stay in port until problems are sorted out. ITF has a network of lawyers around the world who help out in situations like this.

Given agrees with Mohle that many sailors have to put up with "atrocious" living conditions. Some ships are not even seaworthy.

"The main problem is the ship owners," Given contends. Often a ship's owner will be from one country and its crew from another. "There are no international standards ship owners have to follow," says Given. There is also little policing of ships while they are in international waters.

Crews often come from underdeveloped countries, such as the Philippines, and don't know their rights, so ship owners can easily take advantage of them by paying low wages and giving them poor living quarters.

Facing harsh realities

Given believes it's important for Canadians to know about the harsh realities of life on the sea. "When the public sees a ship come up through a canal, they get a romantic feeling," he says, but this is not a good reflection of reality onboard ocean-going ships.

Canadians need to show more concern for seafarers and their needs, says Given. One way is to "take affirmative action" by convincing the Canadian government to enforce international shipping regulations more rigorously. "Canada's one of the more progressive countries" in this area but should be doing more, Given contends.

Another problem seafarers face is backsliding, because of the long stretches of time they spend at sea without attending church, says Mohle.

As chaplain, Mohle conducts a church service at the centre each Sunday evening. Although Mohle is Christian Reformed, he says "we try to be ecumenical" because seafarers are often from a diverse faith background. Many are Catholic, and others are Russian Orthodox, Hindu or Muslim. Mohle finds that one thing most Christians can agree on is the Apostles' Creed, so he often gives out copies of it to sailors.

Mohle also talks with and

prays with visiting seafarers. That is often when he finds out about problems they are facing.

Mohle is a member of Montreal's First Christian Reformed Church, and often gets volunteer help from other church members, especially during "cruise-ship season." That's in September and October, when cruise-ships stop in Montreal, often with as many as 1,500 passengers. "We try to communicate to as many [passengers] as possible," says Mohle, who notes that many cruise ship crews also suffer from poor living conditions.

Couperus says she hopes that more Christians in the Montreal area will volunteer to befriend seafarers, especially if they speak other languages. Interested Christians can also help the centre by making donations.

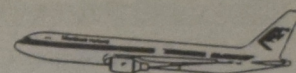
Each Christmas season, the centre shows friendship to seafarers by giving them parcels

of useful items such as socks, scarves, gloves, pens and paper. Last year, the centre gave out close to 2,000 parcels, says Ed Vanderveer, acting director of the centre. "This ministry has been going on since the mid-60s," he explains. Most of the parcels are donated by Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools in the Eastern Canada and Quinte classes.

Currently, these two classes are working on an assessment of the Seafarers Centre to decide "where we should be going in the next five or 10 years," says Vanderveer. "Our challenge is dealing with significant change in the shipping business." One such change is downsizing of crews, due to the increasing use of computers onboard ships. Because of the smaller crews, some ships allow less "shore leave" now, which affects the amount of time seafarers can spend at his centre.

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Editorial

How profoundly do I regret Kuyper's limitations?

I was not able to attend the 100th anniversary of Abraham Kuyper's Stone Lectures held in Princeton, New Jersey, but I read with some interest the reports printed in this issue.

I particularly paid attention to the resolution passed at this conference which states that participants "regard the legacy of Abraham Kuyper as a rich resource for Christian reflection and cultural engagement today. However, we profoundly regret the limitation and shameful distortions of the Gospel present in aspects of Kuyper's writings." Then the statement goes on to mention Kuyper's understanding of race, ethnicity, gender and sex as having caused much pain and suffering.

I had a relative on my mother's side who also regarded Abraham Kuyper as a rich resource. He had a company in my hometown which specialized in metalwork, and it was he who produced those brass plaques of the giant head of Abraham Kuyper that one can still see in the homes of some Kuyperians. I have one of those plaques on my shelf at home. Come to think of it, this relative of mine probably was a loyal Kuyperian and

produced something that he thought was very important. I must not ascribe materialistic motives to him.

I treasure the plaque because I see it as an important part of my people's history. I think I know enough to realize that "Kuyperianism" is a false faith in an image with clay feet. I don't think that I keep the plaque as something to venerate. If I call myself a Kuyperian or a neo-Kuyperian it is because people like handles and it helps to quickly place yourself in a tradition. In the same way I'm known as a Calvinist and a Protestant.

A man of his time

Do I profoundly regret the limitation and shameful distortions of the gospel present in Kuyper's writings? Do I acknowledge that his understanding of race and ethnicity, gender and sex have resulted in much pain? I do and I don't.

To the extent that I know about some of these distortions as found in Kuyper's writings, I do. Frankly, I am not aware of his understanding of sex, for example. But I can well imagine that Abraham Kuyper was a man of his time. The distortions of the gospel present in Abraham Kuyper's writings were distortions shared by the whole Christianized/paganized Western world. Just think of the attitudes towards Natives that prevailed when Europeans came to North America.

In fact, I am sure that if I had been born 100 years earlier than I was born, I would have been guilty of the same distortions we now ascribe to Abraham Kuyper.

We have the benefit of hindsight today, and the benefit of having our eyes opened by liberation movements, a more critical press and more frequent contact with people of other races. When I grew up, I only *read* about blacks in Africa, and the general opinion of them was that they were inferior to us who are white. Nobody thought that it was patronizing and stupid of us to think that way. Today we know better.

Children of our time

Somehow I don't feel more righteous today for having learned these things. And I don't think it was the resolution's authors' intent to judge Abraham Kuyper and his generation, either. I trust that the statement was made in all humility. The phrase "in prayerful dependence on God" as "we commit ourselves, in working with the Kuyperian legacy, to redress these wrongs" points out that we cannot do better than Kuyper if we rely on ourselves.

We are children of *our* time. And I'm asking myself: What will future generations say about us? How will they express their deep regrets about the limitations and shameful distortions of the gospel present in *our* writings and ac-

tions?

Will they point to our stupid reliance on cars as we relentlessly pollute the atmosphere? Will they, from a snug reliance on new inventions that allow them the same freedom of movement without pumping carbon dioxide into the air, judge us for having treated the environment with shameful disregard?

Steering for the star

Maybe they will, and maybe they should. What the type of resolution passed at the 1998 Princeton conference does is function as a kind of course correction.

Picture yourself in a fleet of spaceships. We are merrily cruising along somewhere near Mars and our destination is a new star born 2,000 years ago. We think we are going in the right direction, but suddenly someone points out that we have gone off course. Some of the spaceship captains agree and modify their course. Others are not sure that anything is wrong and stay the course.

New groups are formed as different worldview fleets emerge and dissolve. Whatever it is that we decide about the direction we should take, nobody is exactly sure that we are headed straight for the new star. In fact, it is safe to assume that all of us are off by several degrees.

This is what I feel about the Princeton resolution. I like the statement. I like the fact that we are willing to admit that we need to reform constantly. But whatever we do, let us do it in complete humility.

A dull image?

And let us not underestimate the great gift that Abraham Kuyper was and has been to many, many believers.

The main thing about apologizing for the past is to assume immediate responsibility for our own misguidedness. There is something in me that does not want to apologize for Abraham Kuyper. I would rather apologize for how I have hurt people with *my* prejudices or how the present community of which I am a part continues to hurt others because of our limitations and distortions of the gospel.

I continue to be inspired by much of Kuyper's legacy. Occasionally I polish our brass plaque (a distant relative of Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue with bronze belly and thighs?). It has a habit of turning dull and brownish rather than remaining the bright golden hue that re-emerges when I apply Brasso. I know I am a middle-class, white male son of a gun who has never felt personally attacked by anything Kuyper has ever said or written. But I take care of that matter by allowing the plaque to stay dull for months on end. It functions as a sort of penance for my insensitivity to the pain of others.

BW

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Letters

Is there anything governments can do about poverty?

The discussion in CC's pages on child poverty has had my interest. May I suggest, however, that the points being raised sometimes appear to be based entirely on something called "the poverty line"? Sure, we can argue about whether or not \$18,000 per year (or whatever figure) does in fact represent poverty or not. We can urge the government to put more money into child care, or the National Child Benefit, or GST benefits to low income families. We can call for better school lunches to ease hunger pangs.

But I wonder: of all the people engaged in this discussion, how many actually are experiencing poverty firsthand? Or how many are intimately involved with a family whose lifestyle meets every definition of poverty? How many participants are personally spending time, energy and money to help such a family year after year?

I have neighbors who define poverty as well as anyone else. And I have been involved with them for the past two decades. What this family has taught me defies easy description. Yes, their income is on the low side. But poverty is so much more than insufficient money. Let me give an example.

Poor judgment

One winter, the father and wage earner was laid off for several months. His UIC benefits were slow coming in. They had very little food, with four children. Finally, daylight dawned when the annual Child Tax Credit cheque came to the house. If this were my family, I would

have stocked up on canned goods, footwear for the children, warm winterwear, blankets, perhaps. What did they buy? A VCR and a microwave, if I recall rightly.

Poverty is often defined by a lack of good judgment, an inability to plan ahead, poor parenting skills ("Quit your g...m swearing!" I heard the mother yell at her kids one day), no understanding of budgeting, no thought of saving for a rainy day, living hand to mouth.

Experts have defined this as a lack of life skills, and call for schools to teach them to children. That's a nice thought, but can the influence of the home ever be eradicated by the school? When bedwetting children come to school unwashed, with inadequate lunches and a lack of "cool" clothes, they will soon be outcasts. When parents are unable or unwilling to help children with homework, and lack the most basic resources for this, children will not thrive in school.

Different approach

When my five-year-old granddaughter gets the creative urge, she brings out her craft box filled with markers, construction paper, beads, wooden clothespins, glue, you name it. When the neighbor kids get creative, they find absolutely nothing to help develop their abilities.

My granddaughter is assured of a willing ear when she tells her many stories or sings her songs; the neighbor kids, with perhaps equal native ability and imagination, are too often told to shut up.

When my son and his wife handle their income, they do so responsibly, for

the benefit of their three children. The neighbor is more likely to head for a VLT machine with his pocket full of loonies.

Personal involvement

All of this is intended not to squelch a discussion on child poverty, but to ask a question: Will higher GST credits help such a family? Is there, in fact, anything government can do to cure such social ills?

It's my personal guess that no program, whether by government, churches or agencies, will have much effect. Only the personal involvement of caring individuals, day after tiring day, sometimes, can possibly offer some ray of hope to the children in these families.

They have every strike against them, being semi-literate, at best, when they drop out of school. I think — or maybe I just hope that it's so — that my being a friend to them will provide some encouragement, some hope.

Child poverty has become an issue that's making jobs for people. The same is true for food banks, now part of the scene in most towns and cities. My friend Carl, who lost his legs in a farm accident, says farm safety is a hot topic that's employing too many people. And so I ask it again: How many of those who work and write on child poverty are personally involved?

Anne van Arragon Hutten
Lakeville, N.S.

If it hadn't been for Christ's love

Since the death of Karla Faye Tucker, I have been doing some thinking about the viability of the death penalty. I really appreciate the thoughtful comments of your writers and some of your readers in reaction to the execution of 38-year-old Karla Faye Tucker.

There is no easy answer to the issue of capital punishment. Yet while reading the accounts of Karla's childhood history and early adult life choices, my heart feels very sad and heavy. My basic reaction is: "Except for the grace of God, I could have been Karla. I have the capability of committing a violent, pre-meditated crime, as she did."

I share the following characteristics with Karla: I am her age, and I also experienced a childhood of terror and abuse. Without the support of family and relatives, I could have chosen drugs and prostitution. I did not; simply because I

was too afraid.

Through a slow process of making solid friendships with Christians, Christ's love for me became real, as exemplified by the love that was demonstrated to me. If Karla had had the opportunity to befriend the same kind of people in her late teens, she might have been in my place ... working as a helping professional, making plans to move into a house and marriage later this year.

We are all made new creatures in Christ. There are no easy answers. All I can say is "There but for the grace of God go I." Yet I strongly encourage us to spread the News of the Gospel through our actions of love. Only then can Karla and people like myself see the love of Christ face to face.

Debbie Davis
Hamilton, Ont.

What is Christian in today's music?

I called my neighbor the other day to wish him a happy birthday. "The Christian thing to do." My neighbor is a very good Christian; probably a far better Christian than I am. His daughter answered the phone. I told her I would call later or give my regards in person.

Then I told her that my daughters went to a Bryan Adams concert and that they had had a very good time at the concert. My neighbor's daughter said: "It is not Christian for me to listen to that sort of music."

I thought: "What is Christian? And who is the judge of what is Christian or non-Christian?" I said to her: "Have you ever listened to Bryan Adams' music or do you know if he is Christian or not? Don't judge the level of Christianity unless you know for sure."

Apparently, from what I heard the next

day, she was quite upset and so was her father. When I called to wish him happy birthday, he hung up on me. My thoughts have always been in the direction of Christianity first. I teach my children to build bridges not walls.

Can you imagine, if one day this child would want to come and visit with us at our house, my daughters would have to remove all posters of various rock groups that are to someone else's thinking non-Christian. I listened to the lyrics of Bryan Adams' songs and U2's songs. The music is not all that appealing, but I can remember a time when I was 16. We listened to "Bye, bye Miss American pie." The last part of that song goes: "The three men I admire most, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, they took the last train for the coast the day the music died." Was that Christian? I don't know, you tell me.

In the meantime, I think I will listen to the words of the song we used to sing: "Delve then, search then with united talent, prayerful, careful, under heaven's light. Lead us, feed us, Source of truth eternal. Guard our federation with thy might."

Jake De Graaf
Montreal, Quebec

Correction:

The article on Harry Antonides which appeared on p. 10 of our February 6, 1998, issue was written not by Margaret Dinsdale, as indicated, but by Sue Careless, also a writer from Toronto.

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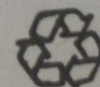
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News/Opinion

Finance Minister gets failing grade from CPJ

Bert Witvoet

TORONTO — When it comes to Paul Martin's latest budget, Gerald Vandezande of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) gives it an F "for its failure to make the elimination of poverty a national priority."

"At best, Mr. Martin's budget can be called a minuscule down payment on a massive and mounting social debt owing to hundreds of thousands of poor children and families," says Vandezande. He recalls the promises made by Martin and others in the House of Commons to eliminate child poverty, which in reality is family poverty.

Half a year ago the Finance Minister stated publicly that "the level of child poverty in this country is a disgrace, and there has got to be a great national effort to deal directly with that." But look as he may, Vandezande could not find any evidence in this year's budget that Martin is lying awake over the problem of child poverty, he says.

Where are the fruits?

In January this year Vandezande put together a letter writing campaign which included such groups as the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Reform Judaism and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Leaders of various national organizations and faith groups wrote letters to Martin urging him to address the serious issue of child poverty.

The campaign was a reaction to the startling figures that 500,000 more children in Canada live in poverty since the one million figure was announced in 1989. The House of Commons at that time passed a unanimous resolution that child poverty would be eliminated by the year 2,000.

"The Minister has a long-term plan for post-secondary students and a plan for the national debt. But he has no real plan to help poor children," says Harry Kits, CPJ's executive director.

Inadequate help

Raising the personal tax credit and eliminating or reducing the general surtax will benefit the working poor, but only inadequately, says CPJ. But these measures do not help those poor who are not working and on social assistance.

"Enthusiasm about the announcement of the next \$850 million for the National Child Benefit is severely tempered by the qualification that this amount will be spread out over two years, and will not begin to flow until July 1999" says CPJ. July 1999 is less than half a year away from the year 2,000, by which time child poverty was supposed to be eliminated.

The increase in deductibility of child care expense will be helpful for some, but it bypasses those parents who stay at home to care for their children or work only part-time, CPJ notes.

Martin's budget missed opportunities

Margaret Dinsdale

OTTAWA — On Tuesday, Feb. 24, federal Finance Minister Paul Martin delivered a highly anticipated budget to the House of Commons. Many faith leaders and public policy critics were holding their breath to see what Martin would do with a predicted budget surplus.

Aside from leaks which flowed regularly, Martin has been on the record several times in the last year as indicating that he was ready to seriously address the issue of the growing numbers of children living in poverty, estimated to be about 1.5 million. In his speech, he often referred to Canada being a community — that we are all in this together. It was a lovely speech, the rhetoric was eloquent and the focus was on a shining future for our land.

But what did the budget really deliver? As a bright light in the National Press Club said, it was "two kilometres wide and one centimetre deep," a bit of this and a dash of that.

The first big item was the oft-leaked claim of a balanced budget. Paul Martin acknowledged that "it was Canadians who have shown great forbearance in shouldering the consequences of actions that have been very difficult. Canadians can be very proud today. This is their victory."

Where the spoils of victory?

What spoils of victory did he give us? As a neophyte Hill reporter, it seems to me that the government was more interested in self-congratulation than in addressing issues such as child poverty. Yes, there is an increase in the child tax benefit, \$850 million this year and \$850 million over the next two years. That sounds good. But according to Nelson Riis, finance critic for the NDP, that amounts to about 80 cents per day for a poor child after it all kicks in.

And the touted tax cuts for low and modest income Canadians? They amount to a couple of hundred dollars per year for most but will be offset by other costs, such as a dramatic increase in Canada Pension Plan premiums scheduled to begin soon. Monte Solberg, finance critic for the Reform Party, was not impressed by these cuts.

There is a new child care tax credit, but this is helpful if first you can afford to pay high child care costs and if you work full-time.

If I recall correctly, some of the election promises the Liberals have made were to instigate a national child care program, a pharmacare program and home care. None of these were even mentioned in the budget, except for those who stay at home to care for someone. They are going to get an extra \$400 per year, \$1.10 per day. Big deal.

Big flurry

The second big flurry of this budget is the "Canadian Opportunities Strategy," the centrepiece of the banquet. This contains the "Canadian Millennium Scholarships," tax relief for student loans and a Registered Education Savings Plan program. The RESP strategy does help families save for their children's education but, like RRSPs, the penalties of dipping in beforehand, or if your child does not pursue further education, will be painful.



Paul Martin

The tax relief for student loans does not help those already burdened with a heavy load and the millennium fund doesn't kick in until 2001, just in time for the next election.

The focus was on the individual in the budget but nothing about the bigger picture, the Canadian community to which Martin referred so fondly, means that there is no new investment in education infrastructure — you know, those frivolous extras called classrooms and teachers and teaching supplies.

Then there was Martin's assertion that the government is investing in health care in a meaningful way. True, there is the AIDS strategy. However, buried in his speech and covered quickly was the CHST, transfers to the provinces for health care, education and social services.

After huge cuts in the last four years to these payments, the federal government is going to restore part of the cuts, an extra \$1.5 billion. But Martin represented this increase as being an example of a commitment to health care alone.

His government eliminated the Canada Assistance Plan in 1995 and the provinces are not obligated to spending targets in any given area. A province could spend it all on education if it chose to.

Cynicism hard to stifle

I don't like to sound so cynical, there is still a lot to be grateful for, living in Canada. We don't have open civil warfare like in Africa, we don't have uncontrollable disease killing our children such as in Iraq, we don't have political chaos like India.

However, when employment insurance benefits surpluses, paid by workers and employers, are used to pay down the deficit instead of addressing the high level of unemployment in the form of training programs, when there is an extra \$7 billion sitting in the GST account that could offset cuts to provincial transfers instead of throwing mentally ill people out onto the streets, when lip service is paid to voiceless poor children but nothing meaningful to help them now, when education dollars are to be used to give seven per cent of students a \$3,000 cheque just in time for the next election, I can't help think that this budget is a document of missed opportunities.

Margaret Dinsdale is a freelance writer who lives in Toronto.



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Reflections

The Stone Lectures and their ripples

Tony Kamphuis

If you could live for 100 years, how would the passage of time change the way you look? While Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) didn't live quite that long, his works have been influential over that span of time. What the 1998 Stone Lectures conference held recently at Princeton Theological Seminary made clear is that a legacy is indeed a living and changing thing, even if part of it is etched in Stone (Lectures).

It is impressive by any standard that an international crowd numbering near 300 spent four days considering Abraham Kuyper's legacy for the 21st century. Scholars from the U.S., England, Canada, Germany and South Africa participated; and the sponsors of the conference put on an impressive display of co-operation between Dutch and American institutions heavily influenced by Kuyper's thought.

Key figures in a whole host of Christian institutions were in attendance, as well as a representation of what Kuyper would have called *kleine luyden* — lay people. And while the gathering was disproportionately male, white and middle aged, it was interesting to see a reasonable representation of younger and older people as well.

Double duality

For me, however, the most interesting distinction to note was the ripple effect of a fairly old distinction among Kuyper's followers of Dutch descent in North America.

A central part of the conference was Nicholas Wolterstorff's five Stone Lectures. (Wolterstorff teaches philosophy at Yale.) Wolterstorff's lectures were a fascinating, often enlightening, detailed look at the Christian's place in this world. In that sense they were clearly within the arena Kuyper's theories dealt with most directly. However, as mentioned above, a legacy is not a static entity, and Wolterstorff's foundational understanding seemed to grow out of one particular side of that legacy.

Wolterstorff suggested that Christians experience a "double duality" in the world. We are "citizens, yet aliens; residents, yet sojourners." Thus we are, in fact, members of God's Kingdom, but also truly members of the local polity. This may strike the ear as a strange formulation. It clearly tries to avoid any sense of "world

flight." Instead, Christians should give thanks for God's good gift of government.

At the same time it tends to de-emphasize another element in Kuyper's legacy. A different branch of the Kuyperian family tree has tended to focus on trying to discover God's creation-order as it presents itself in God's Creation-Word, and as it is revealed in the Scriptures. This line of Kuyper's legacy has tended to attract also those who talk about the "antithesis," another key part of the Kuyperian system of ideas.

Truth claims oppress

Wolterstorff's view stands in marked contrast to this approach. Wolterstorff's stance seems rooted in a fear that this different approach will lead to too simple distinctions between different groups of people, cause insensitive labeling and dismissal of others and encourage an unbecoming triumphalism.

In an academy increasingly sensitized by the rise of post-modernism, any story that would be accompanied by "truth" claims is viewed with suspicion as providing a rationale for oppressing others and claiming special privilege for those on the inside.

This different cultural lighting has clearly changed the way Kuyper looks today. Given how Kuyper's antithesis notion has been used in the past, these concerns are not unwarranted.

Soft dualism

But Wolterstorff's approach, too, has its weaknesses. Regardless of how often one stresses that Christians truly are in both realms at once, dualism (even a "soft" one) causes difficulties, and often precipitates a slide towards an other-worldly focus. Inevitably the question is put: "What happens when the two realms conflict? To which one do we really belong?"

The tendency is toward being critical of the world, not from the inside, but as one who accepts it, at least provisionally.

To me a stronger formulation for avoiding this other-worldly drift would be to follow a different line of thinking within the Kuyperian legacy. This line stresses that God's creation has within it an order that includes government. Thus government is for our good and not any sort of later imposition.

This validates the sense that Christians truly are at home in the world, which is their

Father's creation. There is no need to explain a "paradoxical" duality; instead, all of reality is God's good creation and we are rightly at home, also in our local polity.

The problem of possible conflict with a state, then, is a matter of *direction*, not structure. Is the state being disobedient to its call? Is it too small to fulfill its duties? Too large and overstepping its boundaries? If so, that misdirection should be brought forward and corrected. That might need a "prophetic word."

In addition to the lectures, the conference included a series of five panels of scholars. The make-up of these panels revealed a similar inclination to that found in Wolterstorff's lectures. If the focus is not on discerning a creation-order and leans toward a duality, it will also shape choices made about who to invite.

The missing component

There were those who spoke with a certain prophetic emphasis, though it was generally directed towards Kuyper's legacy itself, calling for it to be "re-visioned." But what was equally interesting was to note who was not there.

It was interesting to note that no scholar from Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies was on a panel. Its worldview places the Institute more within the "creation order" emphasis, and has caused it to (at times prophetically) critique the dominant Enlightenment tradition of our society. The only representative of Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., was Elaine Botha, a South African. Botha's presentation, interestingly, was the most explicit of all in addressing the place of creation-order in the legacy to be brought into the 21st century.

That being said, a conference like this one will probably not happen again any time soon. In that regard it was perhaps the chance of a lifetime to be among this collection of people with such a topic before us. It was certainly an educational and enjoyable event.

What will prove interesting will be to see what of Kuyper's impressive work proves to be durable as Christians consider what God wants of them in his world in the 21st century.

Tony Kamphuis teaches history at Smithville District Christian High School, Smithville, Ont. He thanks his school for allowing him to attend.

A fortress mentality



The "fortress" at the centre of Princeton University's campus.

Tony Kamphuis

The campus of Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary are impressive indeed. The buildings themselves seem to encourage students to diligent study as those young scholars build on an impressive legacy!

What was interesting to note is the architectural residue of a certain approach to the world that remains on this "Ivy League" campus.

The "Old Princeton" school of theology is often characterized by its "fortress mentality," and its Greek view of "Truth." The "fortress mentality" was its reaction to the attacks on Christianity, and the Bible in particular, unleashed by the Higher Criticism of the 19th century.

Furthermore, the school operated with a view of Truth influenced by the Greeks and sympathetic to Enlightenment teachings on Reason and Rationality. Human Reason, as it reflected and participated in Divine Reason, seemed relatively untainted by the effects of sin.

When Kuyper visited the university in 1898, the dominant figure at the seminary was B.B. Warfield. While the two seemed to get along well, two points of difference emerged between Kuyper's worldview and that of "Old Princeton."

Warfield thought apologetics the highest Christian endeavor, as this discipline could appeal to the reason of unbelievers and prove to them the truth of Christianity.

Kuyper thought apologetics a waste of time. People couldn't be "reasoned" into the Kingdom, they *first* needed a redirection of their hearts, he said. Similarly, Kuyper believed one's religious worldview affected all areas of life, and so a Christian worldview would produce a distinctive type of science. Warfield thought this a peculiar claim indeed, as he believed in the unity and truth of science. Proper reasoning really occurred outside the bounds of religion, said the Old Princeton thinkers.

Church

Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998): British Reformed ecumenist remembered

LONDON (ChristianNet) — Lesslie Newbigin, theologian, preacher and a former moderator of England's United Reformed Church, died on Jan. 30 at the age of 88.

One of the first bishops of the United Reformed Church, Lesslie Newbigin had a long and distinguished career, during which he served as a district missionary in India, general secretary of the International Missionary Council, director of the World Council of Churches Division of World Mission and Evangelism and Bishop of Madras. In the 1980s he also served as minister of a small inner-city church

in Birmingham.

Newbigin was the author of many successful and significant books, including *The Other Side of 1984* and *Foolishness to the Greeks*, in which he discussed the problems of secularism and the privatization of religious belief.

Scholar of distinction

Rev. David Jenkins, current moderator of the United Reformed Church, says Newbigin "will be remembered as an outstanding figure in the church of the 20th century. He has proclaimed unity with great courage, probed for truth in tur-

bulent times and has led Christians deeper into faith."

Newbigin was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1909, and brought up in the English Presbyterian Church. His boyhood and youth coincided with the First World War and the turbulent and anxious years of the Depression. When Lesslie entered Cambridge University, it was to study economics, but five years later he returned to study theology.

During that time he wrote his first book, *Christian Freedom in the Modern World*, laying out clearly the convictions regarding the saving power of Christ

which became his lodestar throughout his life.

Leaving college he married Helen Henderson, his life-long companion and support, and together they travelled to India, where Lesslie served as a missionary under the auspices of the Church of Scotland.

His formidable theological acumen and insight were factors in one of the most notable achievements of the ecumenical movement, forming the Church of South India, which brought together Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. The books he wrote in the course of that process have been treasured as resources in subsequent unity negotiations around the world.

When the new Church was formed, Lesslie Newbigin was made one of its first bishops. A year later he represented his church at the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches, beginning a life-long association with the WCC.

No retirement

At retirement age in 1974, Newbigin returned to England, where, instead of retiring, he taught mission theology for five years at Selly Oak College. In 1980 he accepted a call to be minister of a small-inner city church, Winson Green URC, in a multiracial area of Birmingham, where he served until 1988.

During the 1980s Lesslie Newbigin once again began to publish books which brought his name to the attention of Christians in Britain and around the

world.

In *The Other Side of 1984* (1983), *Foolishness to the Greeks* (1986), and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (1989), he set out to examine and question the foundations of secularism, the movement towards the privatization of religious faith and the concept of the Gospel as public truth.

Gospel and culture movement

His work culminated in the Gospel and Culture movement which, in a variety of forms, has influenced Christian thinking around the world and spawned countless projects and initiatives in Britain and overseas.

In 1996 he was one of the main speakers at the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelization in Brazil, which took Gospel and Culture as its theme. On that occasion he was greeted by a standing ovation and, at the age of 86, spoke for an hour without notes.

Always in demand as a writer, speaker and teacher, Lesslie Newbigin maintained a punishing schedule of engagements, despite increasing frailty and failing eyesight.

He remained someone in whom formidable intellect and the high offices to which he had been called never clouded his essential humility. He will be remembered as an outstanding pastor and as one of the most significant missionary theologians and Christian statesmen of the 20th century.

Catholic college forfeits grant to protest ads implying premarital sex

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (EP) — The Phillip Morris Corporation may be used to having its money refused because of opposition to the tobacco industry, but the industry giant probably did not expect the recent refund it received from Belmont Abbey College.

According to a story by Chris Osborn in the *Charlotte Christian News*, Dr. Robert A. Preston, president of the Belmont, North Carolina, Catholic college returned a \$20,000 donation on Feb. 9 and released Phillip Morris from its pledge of an additional \$20,000 because of the content of an advertisement in that date's edition of *Time* magazine.

The full-page ad for Phillip Morris' subsidiary cigarette brand Virginia Slims featured an attractive female model with the printed words, "You're officially our boyfriend when we actually make space for you in our closet."

In a letter returning the donation, Preston expressed opposition to the advertisement's promotion of "a moral view at

odds with the parent Church of this college."

"Belmont Abbey College is a Catholic College and teaches and supports the moral principles of the Catholic Church... [which] for almost 2,000 years, has condemned premarital sex," wrote Preston.

The letter briefly recounted the history of Christian opposition to premarital sex "for the simple reason that self-restraint is the best preparation for marriage" and because "the stability of marriage is the foundation of both the family and society."

Whether a little or a lot

Preston discussed with his ethics class whether the college should accept the money for its literacy campaign, even though the company providing the funds was at odds with the school's core beliefs.

Preston also consulted by telephone with the chair of the college board of trustees, Robert M. Gallagher, who was in San Francisco at the time. "I told him not to ask any questions, but to go to the news rack in his

hotel, look at the back cover of *Time*, and call me in the morning," said Preston.

Gallagher, who also serves as chair of the board of Goodwill Publishing Company, called Preston the next day and, according to Preston, said "I know what you are going to do, and I'm not going to ask how much money we're talking about."

Preston said Gallagher told him, "A prostitute is a prostitute whether she charges a little bit or a whole lot."

After his staff and the trustees, "to a person," supported returning the money, "that confirmed it," said Preston. He then composed the letter and returned the funds.

Preston indicated that he had "never done anything like this before" in his two and a half year tenure as president. "And I don't know anything like this has ever been done before [by the college]."

K. Richmond Temple, a Phillip Norris spokesperson, said that Belmont Abbey initially approached the company to request funds for its literacy project, and that "we regret their decision because our grant would have helped improve literacy in Gaston County."

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Gospel radio comes to England

STOKE-ON-TRENT, England (UCB) — On Dec. 3, 1997, United Christian Broadcasters (UCB), based in Stoke-on-Trent, England, launched Britain's first national Christian radio station. It can be found at 1386KHZ (medium wave) and comes to England via Cold-War-era transmitters in Russia.

A UCB press release says that "the liberation of the former Soviet Russia has led to the miraculous birth of this national radio station. Now that the Russians no longer broadcast communist propaganda to Europe, [this] frequency became available."

UCB's Patricia Hargreaves says, "It is truly amazing that ordinary people, like ourselves, have been able to capture a former propaganda channel and use it to broadcast the Christian gospel." Since Dec. 3, 1997 a frequency once used to broadcast atheistic propaganda has been broadcasting eight hours daily of Christian music, news stories, testimonies and teaching. United Christian Broadcasters can be reached on the Internet at: <http://www.ucb.co.uk>

Feature

A writer takes a writer

takes a writer to lunch

Jessie Schut

Writers are rather an elite bunch, aren't they? A mix of artsy and intellectual, scholarly and impractically dreamy, and generally unapproachable. Well, perhaps. But more than likely, not.

Recently I met two Christian writers for lunch at the Olive Garden in Edmonton. My table mates were Linda Siebenga, a poet, and Carolyne Aarsen, a romance writer. Our mission was to come up with an article for CC readers that would explain and describe the writing process. Over salad and bread sticks the conversation jumped from one topic to the next.

The tape recorder never did get turned on because we weren't sure when the conversation ended and the serious business of writing an article began. Three hours later I was left with a lot of impressions and fragments of conversation jotted down on bits of paper and the job of putting it all together.

But first let me give you brief biographies of the authors.

A publisher was interested

Carolyne Aarsen, 41, is married to Richard, a rancher, trapper and sawmill operator. She's the mother of Jesse, Cheyanne, Fern and Amiel, who range in age from 13-19. She grew up in Edmonton and doesn't recall aspiring to be a writer, but always read a lot.

About eight and a half years ago, Carolyne started taking a writing course by correspondence. One of the assignments was to write a column for her local newspaper. Her teacher encouraged her to submit it. She now writes a humor column called "Our Place" which appears weekly in four small-town Alberta newspapers.

"One day I thought maybe I'd like to write a book. If you read enough books after a while you say, 'I can do this,'" she said. "Then one day I challenged myself to go ahead and do it."

Her first book took three years to finish and was rejected by eight or nine publishers before Harlequin picked it up for their new "Love Inspired" line of Christian romances. *Homecoming* will be coming out in April, and Carolyne's second book, *Ever Faithful*, will be published this summer.

Poetry an outlet

Linda Siebenga grew up on a grain farm in southern Alberta. Living on the dryland prairies

meant she was very much in tune with nature. With two sisters and no brothers, the girls had an opportunity to do some of the jobs brothers would have done — Linda even learned to shoot gophers. The experience showed up later in one of her poems.

After graduating from Calvin College, she began teaching in

she says he does most of the work. "I like to be there for him whenever he needs me, but I help out more in the summer and fall, driving the combine and running the forage harvester when everyone is busy. In the winter I stand at the bottom of the silo and flick switches when he has to fix something at the top."

For Linda, writing was a natural outlet for her feelings and thoughts in the years that she and her husband were waiting for children. She belongs to a local poetry critique group which encourages and challenges her to keep working at her craft.

Linda also helps to edit the newsletter for Earthkeeping, the Alberta organization concerned with sustainable agricultural practices. She's on the board of the Alberta Christian Writer's Fellowship, is very involved with her grandchildren and serves on the board of the local Christian High School.

In 1989, her first book of poetry, *Windcatcher* was published by G.R. Welch Co. Her second book *Waiting for the*

lot, and they instilled in me a real love of reading. Books were often given as gifts, and my mom read aloud often to us. My father read a lot too. There were stages in my growing up years when all I did was read.

Siebenga: My dad had a gift for words. I wrote a poem about him in *Windcatcher* that says, "He liked words/Word Power from the Reader's Digest/Old Testament genealogies pronounced correctly/The poetry of Isaiah." He would recite parts of "The Highwayman", "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," and Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." My mom read more in her later years, but while we were growing up she gave us the acceptance and space to believe in ourselves.

CC: How did you start writing?

Aarsen: It was a creative outlet for me when I was home with the kids, and during the years we had foster children. I read lots of romances when I was younger, and so when I began writing a book, that was the kind I chose to write. And I wasn't



Linda Siebenga, Jessie Schut and Carolyne Aarsen at lunch.

Lacombe, and there met and married Jack Siebenga. They have two children, Shana and Jason, a son-in-law Chris Kooman, and three grandchildren, Avery and twins Fischer and Pierson. The nest is empty now as Jason attends King's University College.

Linda smiles when people describe her as a partner with Jack in the farming business —

Play to Begin was published last summer by New Leaf Works (see review in this issue, p.7).

Questions about the writing life

CC: How did the written word influence you while you were growing up?

Aarsen: My parents read a

happy with a lot of what I read, and I thought I'd like to write something better. I wanted to put a Christian perspective into my work.

Siebenga: I came into the writing business through the back door, when we were waiting to have children. God sometimes plans our lives that way. And I have been experimenting with poetry ever since. It seems

to be the genre that is the most comfortable for me. I wrote two family history books for my family and one for a neighbor, and dabbled in some article writing and newsletter editing. That's been helpful in honing my organizational skills, but it also let me find out that I like writing poetry best.

CC: How do you get ideas for writing?

Aarsen: Who knows? Sometimes it's a flash, or an image, that sparks you. Sometimes you have a full-blown idea, and you just have to write it. I carry around a notebook and a pencil all the time now, because those little ideas can come easily, but they also go easily.

The minister makes a point in his sermon, and I grab my notebook and jot it down. Maybe he thinks that he's scored a good one on me, but actually he's said something that fits one of my characters. So sometimes I have to remind myself that really, "Nadine" or my other book characters shouldn't be in church with me. They should have been left back at the computer.

Siebenga: My ideas come from the things and events around me that leave a strong or tender impression. The pain people have in their lives, nearby or in some war-ravaged country, touches me deeply and I want to respond. So several poems touch on that. "Who wants to be like grass?" is a question all human beings struggle with. How do we deal with the pain of tragedy? Why didn't we do more in Bosnia? Traveling to new or exotic places, like Hawaii, also leaves a strong impression, so I write quite a lot of poetry when we're travelling. Being in nature also stimulates my writing. There's so much beauty in creation, and it inspires awe for a God who created such magnificence and mystery.

Aarsen: When you get a good idea, you have to be careful not to talk about it to anyone. I've done that before, and then when you get around to working on it in your writing, it's gone.

Siebenga: If you have a good idea, you have to nurture it very privately. If you share it with someone before it has a life of its own, it just seems to die. The idea is like a chicken egg before it is hatched. It has a very fragile shell, and needs to develop and grow before being

exposed to the world.

CC: *Do you have a regular writing schedule?*

Aarsen: Now that I have sold a couple of books, I don't feel at all bad about setting aside whole blocks of time and saying, "I'm writing, that's my work." I usually try to do my housework till about 10 in the morning, and then I sit down and write till about 4 in the afternoon. I need to quit before my kids come home from school because I need that time to let go of it, so when they come home, they find their mom, rather than a writer.

It's tempting to keep writing all the time ... at supper, in church, riding down the road to do groceries. I'm constantly trying to figure out what my characters are doing, and how they solve their problems.

Siebenga: My writing schedule is not as regular as I would like. My time gets divided up into committee commitments, family, farm, friends and community involvement. I'm trying to discipline myself to get up when Jack goes out to milk in the morning, and do my writing then.

Capturing the ideas anytime during the day is more important than sitting down at the computer with no ideas. So I like to have a few poems in stages of progress that can be worked on when the new ideas aren't there. Sometimes I write pages of notes and ideas that end up in just one poem. Sometimes a poem comes more like a free-fall experience and is almost complete. Other times each word and phrase needs to be reworked and deliberately chosen over a period of time. Belonging to a regular local writer's group helps to provide a deadline.

CC: *Who are you writing for?*

Aarsen: Many people. I write for people who want an alternative to the steamy stories that a lot of Romances have become. And I have an inner critic.... I write for a few people whose opinion matter to me, and when I write, I always try to think about whether it would please them.

Siebenga: When I write for a group or a magazine, the poetry is not as effective as if I write out of praise to God, or out of response to the events around me. So, to some extent I'm writing for God. I think most Christian writers would say that, at

bottom, serving God motivates their writing.

CC: *How do you think your writing affects other people?*

Aarsen: Once our community had tragedies happen to two families involving the deaths or injuries of children, very close together. And because we had a

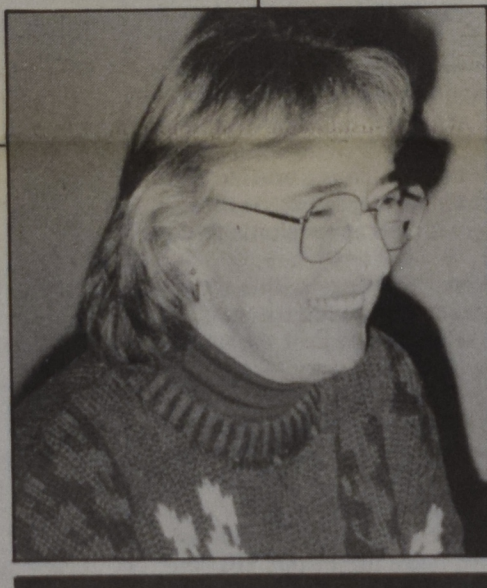
read Romance novels.

Over 50 per cent of mass market paperbacks sold are romances. So I'm writing to those people, and if a Christian doesn't write for them, what are they going to be reading? People are looking for happy endings, for hope in a pretty brutal world. David Lyle Jeffrey, author of

People of the Book, is quoted in the *Alberta Report* article as saying the romance genre is essentially Christian in its roots. "In pagan times, they had tragedies, comedies and heroic epics, but they didn't really have romances with genuinely



JESSIE SCHUT PHOTOS



foster child who died a few years ago, it brought back many feelings of grief, so I had to write a serious column that week. A woman who'd read the column called me in tears; my words had really touched her. That's a pretty awesome responsibility.

Siebenga: Yes, I've had letters from people saying thank you for putting into words what they also had felt. When people really read the poetry, they find themselves there [in the poem] because we all share the common experiences of joy, distress, fear, grief and other emotions.

Aarsen: I'm hoping that my book will encourage people to think about spiritual things. But I also think it's important to write a book that just entertains them, so they can enjoy life.

CC: *Carolynne, some people think that Romance writing is fluff, not worth a lot. How do you answer them?*

Aarsen: Sure, a lot of people think Romance writing isn't good writing. The editor of "Alberta Report" called it "shlock," and that makes me cringe a little. I'm under no illusion that I'm writing great literature. But the fact of the matter is, people

happy, domestic endings," he says. "Left to itself, nature normally gives people defeats, and it wasn't until Christianity that most people began to live lives of persistent hope."

CC: *Linda, some people may think poetry is just a frill, not all that important. How do you feel about that? What's the value of poetry?*

Siebenga: Poetry is an expression of who we are as people, and can voice or mirror what is happening in our society. In an article Calvin Seerveld wrote when *Christian Courier* was still the *Calvinist Contact*, he said that "Every congregation, every school or college or office, needs a poet laureate."

Poetry is used in wartime or on political platforms to persuade or inspire the crowd. It is used for celebrations and

graduations, to applaud and to challenge people. It voices the depths of love and pain in times of mourning and gives verbal hugs and appreciation on birthdays and anniversaries. It has a very important place in society.

Nelson Mandela said, "Poetry cannot stop a bullet ... but it can bear witness to brutality — thereby cultivating a flower in the graveyard." (*Sojourners* magazine, May/June, 1996). Maybe I can't stop a bullet with my poetry, but my third-eye observation and my thin skin can witness pain and joy and scrape away the film of carelessness and apathy, hate and despair that shrouds some of life.

CC: *What's the importance of Christian writers to the Christian community?*

Aarsen: What we can do as Christian writers is express our own problems and show others that what they're dealing with is not terribly unique. We can show that we all draw our strengths from the same source, and by the same token, we celebrate the same things and find joy in the same things.

CC: *What's the importance of Christian writers to the world at large?*

Aarsen: In my column, the importance of what I do, is make Christ real and accessible. I think in my writing it comes through that I am a Christian. I try to show in my life as a Christian there is humor, there's joy, there's frustration. I'm not perfect, I don't try to evangelize, that's not the point of the column, but I hope readers realize that Christians are human, and have a way of dealing with all these experiences that has Christ at its heart. In my novel writing, I try to make my characters ordinary and real, and the same with their situations. I don't want to write a sweet little story where everything is perfect, because life isn't like that. I want to show real life, with Christ as part of it.

Siebenga: Writers voice the "whys" of our existence — they look deeply inside themselves, sensing the relationships around them, between the Creation and its creatures. Christian writers have accessed the words of the Maker of the Universe, so they are more responsible to give that perspective and provide a new way of looking at life. C.S. Lewis compared his role as a Christian writer to an adjective

humbly striving to point others to the noun of truth.

CC: *What's "bad" about writing?*

Aarsen: It's not nearly as much fun to read a book or watch a movie anymore, because I'm constantly rewriting it, or trying to analyze how everything will work out.

Siebenga: When you're a writer, you develop a critical edge. Then when you have to edit papers or scripts, it overflows into your relationships with other people.

Also, it's hard when you have to re-experience the pain to write about it.

Aarsen: I can't ever let it go...., there's rarely a time when you can just relax. It's a very public thing we're doing. People can review our stuff and say it's bad, or suggest other, better ways of writing it. Someone said that writing is like dancing naked in front of a crowd You are very visible, and all your faults are obvious to the public. We're very vulnerable.

And sometimes writing is very hard work that never gets rewarded. If a publisher hadn't come along, what would have happened to my writing? Sometimes I really think I should just go out and get a nine to five job. It would be so much easier and financially more rewarding. Really, none of us would be writing if our families depended on our incomes.

Siebenga: Another thing that is hard is having an invisible career. Even though people know you write, it isn't something that is taken seriously. When my first book was published, a box of books arrived via the mail carrier when my husband and the hired man were having coffee in the kitchen. We opened the box — there was no fanfare of trumpets, or anything like that. Inside myself I wanted to have some big celebration for the birth of this book that took seven years to be born. I had this irrational expectation that having a book out would say, "Yes, you are a poet." Our family did go out for supper and my friends came over with their congratulations, which was lovely. They were all very supportive. Beyond that people don't really realize the work that goes into writing or how much time it takes.

Aarsen: We need to balance our lives very carefully. What's most important — our homes

Continued on page 13...

Arts/Media

Book Review

Her strength is in her eye

Deborah Boven

Waiting for the Play to Begin

by Linda Siebenga.

Edmonton: New Leaf Works, 1997. ISBN 0-9682443-0-0 (paper). 74 pp. \$10 (Cdn.).

Linda Siebenga's second book of poems will be a happy surprise to those reluctant poetry readers who expect to find contemporary poetry "difficult." Her poems are easily accessible and their often explicit relation to faith gives them a particular resonance for the thoughtful Christian.

Siebenga's greatest strength is in her eye. She sees freshly. Living on a dairy farm in Alberta, she is acutely conscious of the natural

to the daily presence and comforting power of the transcendent:

*the seeds that spill like silken sand
into the palm and then the ground
weld themselves into coffin earth
shrug off their podded veils
cracked dried reflections of their dying
till their birthing morning
brings them whistling to the sun.*

This awareness of the eternal in the everyday travels with her to Europe: "we asked for angels and they ran beside us/opening doors." And this same awareness leads her to describe the Alberta farmland as the place where God has put people to tend it until, in a lovely image, "our spirits sprint beyond the grains of time/shrug off the dust and bathe in that transparent sea."

Siebenga also has strong things to say about consumerism, the environment, ethnic cleansing, Third World development; but she is generally less powerful when more message-oriented, and sometimes forgets that cardinal poetic rule about the need to "show" rather than "tell."

Surprisingly, Siebenga's most overtly biblical poems are at times her least fresh, as though she cannot get beyond the known words to the new insight.

In terms of form, Siebenga's line-breaks don't always work: some lines are too staccato to fit the sense of what they say, or the breaks seem arbitrary or even unnecessary — why not prose? It would be good to see her try more of the meditative prose-poetry that she uses for the prologue to the poem about a Toronto trip: some of her poems would be more effective in this more continuous, less truncated form.

She has a good ear for alliteration and assonance, but doesn't make use of this gift consistently; she could experiment a bit more with the subtle kinds of internal rhyme that blend well with the other sound-plays she often uses so effectively.

These things said, this is a volume of poems that enrich and warm the spirit, because Siebenga's eye is clear and her faith is real. A couple of typos notwithstanding, her new volume is pleasantly formatted in brown and cream, and includes four sepia-toned photographs. The preface is by well-known Christian author Maxine Hancock, who writes, "In this collection, you, too will find poems to read and reread, to prompt your own response of refreshed vision of this good earth and, perhaps, of worship."

It's good to recognize creative gifts expressed within our Christian community: *Christian Courier* readers will enjoy this opportunity to taste and see these gifts for themselves.

Dr. Deborah Boven is assistant professor of English at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.



Linda Siebenga reads from her book *Waiting for the Play to Begin* at the recent *Earthkeeping* conference.

world, its rhythms and its sharp surprises: the meadowlark "stapling [her] lyrics/against/a silk washed sky"; The cows' asalt-block smoothed by "sandpaper tongues" that "mother-lick their newborn into wanting life"; the summer evening moon "an oyster shell orb"; the summer sun "splashing and creeping/a golden amber flood" across the fields.

I especially enjoyed her evocation of prairie farm life: her pride in the kids helping with the haymaking, the wrench of having to shoot an old mare, the test to faith when "this summer everything spills out of the sky/onto the work we had planned."

The Alberta moon is still in her mind when on a trip to Toronto the moon seems "tucked between the eaves/of three-storey houses," or when, on travels down south to Kauai Island, "we/watched the skim slick moon rise over the surf/beyond the shadows of coconut palms/a satin silver sheen bathing the ocean."

Awareness of the eternal

Siebenga relates this sharpness of vision to the immediately personal family matters of growing up, letting go and asking forgiveness, of old age, sickness and death. The title poem of the fourth and last section of the book, "whistling to the sun," illustrates well both Siebenga's skill with sound and her sensitivity

Does creation cringe at our coming?

*does creation cringe at our coming
does it see us at a distance
with the tools to permanently scar its face
with no healing balm to fix the gouges
we have scraped
the forests we have shaved off the mountains
til there are no roots to hold the soil
that erodes into the valleys*

*does creation cringe at our coming
as we squeeze and push it each year
to give up all its nutrients
never letting it catch its breath
never letting it have a sabbath
a time of renewing*

*does creation cringe at our coming
when the axe fells all the roadside trees
the ones that stretched their fingertips
to the heavens in the purpling evening sky
the ones that cradled nests in their outstretched arms
and caught the wind between fields of topsoil*

*does creation cringe at our coming
when we mask its surface in chalky concrete
block by block section by section
advancing like the slowest army
the deadliest predator of the best farmland
that grew the food we ate yesterday.*

* title is a quote of Calvin DeWitt

Linda Siebenga

All the days of his life

*half-veiled the sky spills rain like tears
beside bent-headed daffodils and sunshine
power that welds the raindrops into bows
riveting each end to the horizon robin
already whistling in the glassy puddles on the deck*

*your letter from half a continent away
feels heavy in my hand your name
alone on the return address a harbinger
of news we knew someday would come*

*the in memoriam card falls from between
the pages that shared your reflections
of his valiant fight to live all the days of his life
refusing to let the pall of cancer blight his cheer
and daunt his courage*

*your crimson pain
of breaking a bond of twenty five years
is reflected in your children's faces as lines
of friends and family come to help carry
some of the agony*

*communion of the saints
and you know that underneath it all
are the everlasting arms of Jesus.*

Linda Siebenga

Congratulations to Jessie Schut on the recent release of her book of children's devotions *A Pile of Stones* published by CRC Publications.

Carloyne Aarsen and Linda Siebenga.

Imajenings

When spring flips

One of the first crisp days of spring found me sitting on the stone step out front warming my hands on my mug of tea. Out on the lawn young grass perked enthusiasm, daring to green, to grow in spite of winter's still powerful assault. Spring and the resilience of new life always surprise me.

Jeremy, who lived near us, hopped up the sidewalk and plopped himself down beside me. His skinny knees poked through the holes in his jeans. Deep brown eyes shone brightly above huge dimples that radiated gleeful pride on his face.

"Lookit my paper! I did real good!"

Jeremy struggled with second grade. The three r's refused to line up for this bright little boy. Soccer and baseball kept him in demand with all the kids on the block. For teams, Jeremy was always picked first. His ease with gymnastics, flips and cartwheels kept the bigger kids practicing for hours.

None could master movement as easily as it came to Jeremy. But school was something he just couldn't do.

The sheet he showed me had 10 lines, eight of them boasting huge red check marks. Two x's in the minority this time. Jeremy's dimples welled into joyous caverns and I couldn't help but cheer.

"Wow! Eight right! Good job, Jeremy!"

We were warned about Jeremy when we moved into the neighborhood. If anything went missing, we were told, look for Jeremy and we'd find it. If any of the kids on the street were crying, chances were good Jeremy would be in the thick of it. Jeremy was not to be trusted, we were warned. Jeremy was a mean kid, violent and destined for trouble.

A secret life

Maybe it was his dimples that undid me.

It was true that his house near the corner saw a lot of the police. We would peek through the blinds late in the night sometimes and see him up and busy watching, turning cartwheels on the grass amid the noise and confusion in his yard, hours after our children were tucked safely in.

Occasionally Jeremy did have bumps and bruises that he said were because he fell. The agile little tumbler fall? The woman on the telephone asked me if I actually witnessed anything. My response was politely filed and they would get back to me if anything ever came up.

Jeremy borrowed bikes from our yard, always asking please and returning them after a spin up the street. Sometimes, Jeremy grasped the chubby little fingers of his younger siblings crossing the street to play in our yard, earnestly checking both ways first. He'd make them say please and thank you. When no one was look-



"None could master movement as easily as it came to Jeremy. But school was something he just couldn't do."

ing, he tickled them under their chins, making them giggle. I forgot our neighbors' warnings and he proved himself most trustworthy.

A few times, I braved the front porch of the house on the corner, only once receiving an answer to my knocking. The woman in the robe, scowling, was his aunt and she wanted to know what he had done wrong now. I tried to tell her I just wanted to say how much I liked the kid, but she stared through me and I shrivelled back off the porch, feeling foolish.

New hope

I was honored when he chose to show his paper to me that spring day. So it was hard to believe the stories I heard from the neighbor when she saw that we were getting friendly. Seems Jeremy was not all good. Kept out of school for a week for spitting in his teacher's face last month. Caught stealing toys from the little kids down the road. A kid up the street had two black eyes thanks to Jeremy. And the neighbor didn't have it confirmed, but she'd heard that those short bike trips he made had to do with running drugs.

We never saw that side of Jeremy. Were we blind? Or just foolish?

I looked at the new spring grass. What wonder gave such abundant courage and grace to pull the curious green shoots through the cold, wet soil? What miracle anew brought green growth in spite of a hard winter, every reason to wither and die away, all the elements set against it?

I didn't think then of the mowing, weeding, raking coming up. I marvelled and drank in the joy of the new hope it gave.

Hope for me. For I see that God holds the new grass and the little boy now sailing into a perfect back flip across it. And thus I know he holds me. That is the miraculous assurance.

Jen VanderBeek is a freelance writer and a mother of five. With her pastor husband, Peter, she lives in Forest, Ont.

A writer takes a writer takes a writer to lunch

...continued from page 11
and families, or developing and using our talents?

CC: What's best about writing?

Aarsen: When words obey ... when an elusive fact is caught and put on paper, and someone tells you you've captured what they think and are trying to express.

Siebenga: Writing satisfies something inside me. Being able to draw out an elusive thought or feeling and give it a life is a high. I enjoy the freedom of being able to choose what I want to write and when and what I want to study. There are so many ideas to be tapped, and writing poetry gives me a chance to be legitimately divergent.

I also find I can communicate a little of the hope that is within me. There are thoughts I want to

pass on in concrete form to our children, this generation and the next, and writing gives me an opportunity to do that.

CC: Lots of people think they'd like to become a writer. What do you say to them?

Aarsen: Read. Read books by other writers, read books about writing. Join a writers' group if you can. Write what you want to write. I believe God can and should be glorified in many different ways and genres.

I think it was Obe Wan Kenobe who said to Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*, "Once you start down that dark path, forever it will rule your destiny...." So beware!

Garrison Keillor said that if you wonder if you're a writer, try stopping for a month; if you can't do that, then you may as well give in.

Alberta association encourages Christian writers

EDMONTON — Christian writers in Alberta, and indeed across Canada and even in the U.S., are getting encouragement and training in their craft from a grassroots writing organization.

Alberta Christian Writer's Fellowship tacked the words "Canada Wide" to their organization's name last year. Members were responding to numerous requests from writers outside the province to join the group, which now numbers 178.

The group was begun 18 years ago by three writers in Central Alberta who attended a Decision School of Christian Writing workshop run by the Billy Graham organization. The group has steadily grown in size and expanded its scope, becoming more and more professional in its organization and output. Now, the organization puts on annual spring and fall conferences where members can enter contests, listen to professional speakers and workshop leaders and socialize with each other. It also publishes a quarterly newsletter that's full of helpful information and encouragement. ACWF also set up a list-serve on e-mail so members can easily communicate news and views to each other.

"When I went to my first conference about six years ago," says Aarsen, "I was really encouraged. I met published writers who were actually doing what I wanted to do. It was professional, not just a lot of talk."

She really benefitted from the hands-on workshops that show writers the practical necessities of writing, like how and where to submit your manuscript, how to sell an article and how to conduct an interview. These are practical tools that are indispensable for writers, she explains, because, "nobody's knocking on your door asking to buy your writing. You need to get out there and market it."

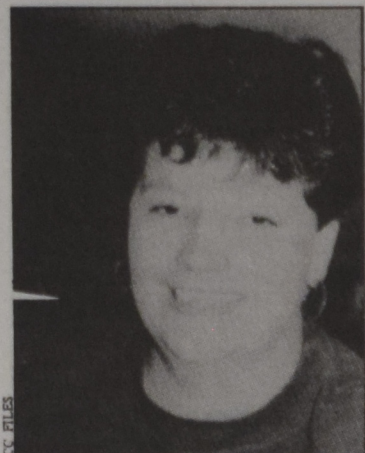
Linda also cites the value of belonging to a community of kindred spirits. "The people you meet at a writer's conference are doing the same 'strange' things you're doing. It affirms in me that it's okay to be a writer, and the meetings challenge and equip me to become better and better at my craft."

(Aspiring writers may get more information about ACWF-Canada Wide from President Elsie Montgomery, 34-1130 Falconer Rd., Edmonton, AB T6R 2J6; phone 403-988-5622; e-mail: emontgom@compuserve.ab.ca)

News/Agriculture

CPJ staffer takes leave of absence

Aboriginal rights work continues



Lorraine Land

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Due to financial restraints, Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is making changes this year which will affect how it deals with aboriginal issues.

Lorraine Land, CPJ's aboriginal issues co-ordinator, is taking a one-year leave of absence for two reasons, the agency reports. CPJ's finances have required a temporary staff reduction for 1998, and Land desired a change of pace after seven years of active work in social justice, including a time for rest and reflection.

Harry Kits, CPJ's executive director, asserts that the agency remains committed to seeking justice for Canada's aboriginal peoples by creating room for dialogue and public policy change among non-aboriginal Canadians. The agency intends to bring Land back on staff in January 1999. "While we regret the temporary loss of Lorraine's professional and dedicated commitment to aboriginal issues for this year, CPJ will remain actively involved," says Kits.

One way CPJ is showing its support for native people is through its new resource and study kit on aboriginal issues,

called "Wiciwetowin: Walking Together." This kit is designed to help caring, justice-seeking Christians to reflect and act on issues related to aboriginals, with the aid of biblical reflections, worship resources, fact sheets, and personal stories shared by aboriginal Christians.

CPJ published the kit in co-operation with the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, World Vision Canada, the Aboriginal Task Force of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and the Basilian Human Development Fund. Of the other agencies involved, "some provided money, some provided ideas and support," says Kits, "but basically, it's CPJ's work."

The kit is CPJ's response to a challenge by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples to Canadian churches to foster understanding between aboriginal and non-native people, and to play a vital role in bringing about reconciliation between these groups.

CPJ also plans to remain involved with aboriginal issues by:

- publishing regular articles on native issues in its newsletter, *The Catalyst*;
- continuing to lobby Canada's first ministers to include aboriginal peoples in government-to-government talks;
- continuing participation in the Voisey's Bay Innu Rights Coalition.

Recently, the coalition has been studying an environmental review of the Voisey's Bay project conducted by INCO, which plans to start mining soon in that area. Lorraine Land continues to be involved with the coalition on behalf of CPJ, says Kits. She will participate in environmental hearings related to the project, which are scheduled for later this year.

Look what we've done to ourselves

Waiting for an elevator in a hallway recently, I noticed coming my way the largest man I have ever seen. Not only was he quite tall, but his circumference equalled his height. I wonder where he obtained the parka large enough to contain his body. Straight down the middle of the hall he came, swinging his seemingly tiny briefcase in a big circle around his body. I backed up against the wall. As he passed me he puffed like a steam engine. The curly hair above his red face looked as though it was frizzled by the heat he was generating. The poor man had a desperate look about him, as though he feared never arriving at his destination, and indeed I feared the same.

I am sure the man has long been digging his grave with a spoon. And that is all too common today in our part of the world. Obesity has been identified as a serious health problem which afflicts a large portion of both the Canadian and American populations.

The big killers in the Western world are all diet-related: heart disease, adult-onset diabetes, strokes, some cancers. In contrast, in the less-affluent parts of the world people die of contagious, not diet-related, diseases.

As a primary food producer (and consumer), I am concerned about food-related disease because I live in the wealthiest part of the world. And am I guilty for producing some of the food which is killing people?

I think not. People, after all, are responsible for the choices they make. They can choose wholesome food. They can choose to eat a modest amount. Of course there are many stresses created in our pursuit and use of wealth which result in emotional strain, which, in turn, can result in eating disorders. But the problem is obviously bigger than that, and it does come down to choices.

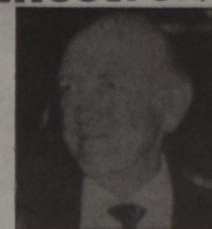
Profit predominates

Something frightening about food choices available, though, is that many of them are the products of huge business interests whose main objective is not good nutrition but profits. Shelf life is more crucial than what is in the package. Eye and palate appeal take precedence over nutrition. Sales volume is more important than ballooning bodies.

Modern technology allows for the separation and removal of food constituents from the original farm product, leaving mostly empty calories suited to mass production of fast or junk food. The constituents removed are sold

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



back as expensive supplements to those who want to have a healthy diet.

Adding to the insult of both our bodies and intellect are labelling laws which allow retail products to be misinterpreted. For instance, whole wheat bread is not really whole wheat bread. The wheat germ is gone, and along with it, the important vitamin E. Most of the bran, which supplies fibre and some vitamins and minerals, is gone too.

Moderation mugged

Eating processed and prepared food means eating much fat because it is there for the convenience of cooking, or it adds a certain desired texture or taste. We have, however, been subjected to a huge public campaign to make us all aware of the dangers of eating too much fat. Also, the food processors have come up with a host of low-fat or non-fat products. So why are we as a population still gaining weight?

When the body takes in more starches, sugars and protein than it needs, there is a conversion to fat, which is stored in the body. So, though one should be careful about the amount and type of fat eaten, the greater problem is that of eating too much food and eating an unbalanced diet, one too high in sugars, starches, fats and proteins and too low in fibre, vitamins and minerals.

How do we eat right? Return to a simple diet containing whole grains, modest amounts of meat, lots of vegetables and some fruit, cooked and fresh, like Great-grandma did.

Where can we obtain healthy food? As a consumer and producer of food, I want to know what is in what I am eating, so I either grow it myself or try to buy food produced as close as possible to where I live. Farmers' markets are the best place for the urban dweller to establish a trust relationship with the suppliers of the freshest, least-altered, least treated foods.

We are what we eat. Our choice should be to consume moderate amounts of a balanced diet of food that is in a state as close as possible to how God made it. Perhaps then our bodies will resemble what God intended them to be.

Vern Gleddie, who owns a sheep ranch outside Edmonton, stays trim by not only producing his own food, but getting plenty of exercise while doing it.

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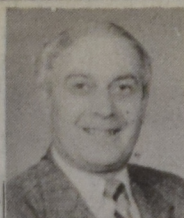
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	<p>1948 April 1 1998</p> <p>"The Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore" (Ps. 121:8).</p> <p>With gratefulness to God, we are pleased to announce the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents</p> <p>HARRY and GRACE DE JONGE (nee SCHENK)</p> <p>Liz & John Vannoord — St. Thomas Doug (Julie), Scott, Terri-Lynn Clare & Lou De Jonge — Chatham Ryan, Lindsay, Jeremy Pete & Sher De Jonge — Chatham Lucas, Sybil Harold De Jonge (Barb) — Chatham Rozlyn, Lisha (Stephanie) (Jillian) Ed & Faye De Jonge — Chatham Stephanie, Jaimie, Jessica, Kaitlyn</p> <p>Because of illness open house will be held on June 6, 1998, at St. Paul's Congregational Church, Chatham, Ont., from 1-3 p.m. Home address: P.O. Box 575, 18 University Dr., Chatham, ON N7L 4V5</p>	<p>Barrie, Ont. Barrie, Ont.</p> <p>1958 March 29 1998</p> <p>With thanksgiving to God for His goodness and faithfulness</p> <p>VIC and JANE TRIEMSTRA</p> <p>hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on March 29, 1998, D.V.</p> <p>Congratulations Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa, we wish you God's richest blessings in the years that lie ahead.</p> <p>With love from your children and grandchildren, Nellie — Kitchener, Ont. Anita & Dave Thomas — New Westminster, B.C. Kevin & Kim Triemstra — Barrie, Ont. Sarah, Jordan Jason & Carolyn Triemstra — Barrie, Ont. Brittany</p> <p>Family and friends are invited to celebrate with them at an open house to be held in their honor on March 28, 1998, at First Chr. Ref. Church on Shirley Avenue in Barrie, Ont., from 2-4 p.m.</p> <p><i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness.</i></p> <p>Address: 517 Big Bay Point Road, Barrie, ON L4N 3Z6. Phone: (705) 728-1401.</p>	<p>Nijkerk Willowdale the Neth. Ont.</p> <p>March 23, 1937 - Feb. 25, 1998</p> <p>"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life..." (Rev.22:1-2).</p> <p>Peacefully the Lord called unto himself our beloved wife and mother</p> <p>THERESE (TONI) VAN DE KAMP (nee BROUWER)</p> <p>Lovingly remembered by Hendrik, her husband for over 30 years, and her children: Douglas & Karen Van de Kamp — Vancouver, B.C. Daphne Van de Kamp & Paul Wiersma — Willowdale/Toronto, Ont. Dawn & Robert Jones — Willowdale, Ont.</p> <p>Memorial service was held on March 7, 1998, at Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church, Rev. Herman Van Niejenhuis officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: H. Van de Kamp, 110-12 Deerford Rd., Willowdale, ON M2J 3J3</p>	<p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>SOCIAL SERVICE WORK — Become a part of our team of committed professionals providing loving care to needy children. Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties is accepting applications for foster parents and group home parents. For more information about our program, including salary and benefits, please call or write: Personnel Manager Mutual Support Systems P.O. Box 397 Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 Phone: (905) 892-4332</p>
	<p>Accommodation Needed</p> <p>Single, 21-year-old male, non-smoker, requires a furnished or unfurnished bachelor or 1-bedr. apartment for May 1, 1998, in the Ottawa region of Kanata. Please contact a.s.a.p. (519) 271-0523 collect (Stratford) or e-mail: tmartin@orc.ca</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>ONE TO ANOTHER</p> <p>Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5.</p> <p>Write to: #12 923 2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES</p> <p>available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>	<p>Vacation</p> <p>GOING TO HOLLAND FOR VACATION?</p> <p>Why not rent A BUNGALOW OR APARTMENT in * Gelderland * Drenthe * * Limburg * Groningen * * Friesland * and visit family and sight-see at your leisure. Year-round accommodations. For brochure or more information call Harold or Nellie at (905) 985-7891 or fax us at (905) 985-3007 E-mail: hamel@idirect.com</p>
<p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>Full-time salesclerk for rural hardware and farm supply store. Must be energetic and self-motivated with good communication skills. Knowledge of residential and commercial plumbing and heating supplies an asset. Send resume to Wellandport Home Hardware, Box 100, 5157 Canborough Rd., Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0, Fax: (905) 386-6918.</p>				<p>Employment Wanted</p> <p>Serious hard working Dutch young man (18) is looking for a job (at short notice) on a crop- or dairy farm in Canada for about half a year. Speaks English. Waiting for your reaction. Martin Chr. Bouwman, Ermelo, the Netherlands. Phone 011-31-34-1551816 (home) Phone 011-31-35-5415252 (office)</p>

Classifieds

Teachers	Teachers	Teachers	Job Opportunities
<p>ALLISTON, Ont.: Alliston Community Chr. School invites applicants for a 1-year maternity leave contract position teaching grades 5 and 6. Preference given to candidates whose qualifications include French and Music. A.C.C.S. serves approx. 100 students in a growing community 1 hour north of Toronto. Send resumes to:</p> <p>Mr. T.J. Tristram, Principal P.O. Box 592 Alliston, ON L9R 1V7</p>	<p>HAMILTON, Ont.: Calvin Chr. School invites teachers to apply for a possible opening at the primary level (grades 1-3), as well as a possible 40% position at the grade 7 and 8 level. Preference for the grade 7 and 8 position will be given to the candidate with a science and computer background. Please send resume to:</p> <p>Mr. Ted J. Postma, Principal 547 West 5th St. Hamilton, ON L9C 3P7 Phone: (905) 388-2645 Fax: (905) 388-2769</p> <p>Deadline for applications is March 23, 1998.</p>	<p>LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, approx. 371 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for a junior high social studies - language arts position (1 year maternity) and possible upper elementary positions. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to:</p> <p>Martin Folkerts Lacombe Chr. School 5206-58 Street Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9 Phone: (403) 782-6531 Fax: (403) 782-5760</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Inviting Applications</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Timothy Christian School, Toronto (Rexdale), Ontario</p> <p>invites applications from qualified and experienced junior level teachers for the 1998/99 school year. TCS is a west end Toronto school with an enrolment of approximately 200 students, and a staff of 12 teachers. We have a full computer lab, an art, music, and accelerated reading program, and a student population rich in cultural and denominational diversity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you are interested in joining our teaching team, send your application to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Coby Jonker, Principal Timothy Christian School 28 Elmhurst Dr., Rexdale, ON M5W 2J5 Phone: (416) 741-5770 or Fax: (416) 741-3359</p>
<p>CALGARY, Alta.: Trinity Chr. School is seeking a grade 6 and 7 teacher. Contact:</p> <p>Stan Hielema, Principal #100, 295 Midpark Way SE Calgary, AB T2X 2A8 Phone (403) 254-6682 Fax (403) 254-9843 E-mail: trinity@spots.ab.ca</p>	<p>LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School seeks a part-time teacher (.5-.75) for 1998/99 as a result of adding a second grade 12 class to our high school. We may also need a permanent full-time position. Consider joining an encouraging society, which together with an excellent staff, works to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition to 120+ high school students. We invite those with experience and/or expertise in computer/business education, and/or art/humanities to apply. However, we will consider all applicants who are willing and able to teach a variety of core subjects. An ability and interest in coaching an extracurricular sport would be an asset. Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or have teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:</p> <p>Jack Vanden Pol, Principal Central Alberta Chr. High School 22 Eagle Rd. Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7 Phone: (403) 782-4535 Fax: (403) 782-5425 E-mail: cach@telusplanet.net</p>	<p>TORONTO, Ont.: Willowdale Chr. School invites applications for a one year (98/99) primary teaching position. Candidates with a CSTC will be given preference. "Math Their Way" familiarity will also be appreciated. Please direct inquiries or send resumes to the principal:</p> <p>Mrs. C. Bootsma Willowdale Chr. School 60 Hilda Avenue North York, ON M2M 1V5 Phone: (416) 222-1711 Fax: (416) 222-1939</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Church Position Available</h2> <p>The Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church of Hamilton, Ont., is seeking a Senior Pastor due to the retirement of our present pastor on Sept. 1, 1998. We are a congregation of 654 members, located in a residential neighborhood near the Christian elementary school, the Christian high school, and Redeemer College. We desire a pastor who can challenge us through effective preaching, equip us through teaching and training, and who has a passion for outreach. The pastor must be a team player with other ministry staff. A church profile is available upon request. For more information, contact Herman Proper, Chairperson of the Search Committee, 617 Hwy. #53 East, Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9 or telephone (905) 648-0604 (Res.); (905) 648-2100 (Bus.) or Fax: (905) 648-2110.</p>
<p>DUNNVILLE, Ont.: Dunnville Chr. School invites candidates to apply for a possible opening in the Junior Division for the 1998-1999 school year. The ability to teach French and a working knowledge in computer technology will be regarded as an asset. D.C.S. is a well-established, growing school, in a pollution-free, semi-rural setting, but close enough to urban centres in the Niagara Peninsula.</p> <p>As a very supportive, active community, we offer a program that includes a challenging curriculum, a library, special education, a gymnasium, and extensive extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>If you would like to become part of a vibrant team with a mix of young and young-at-heart colleagues who are committed to provide high quality Christian education, please forward your resume to the Principal:</p> <p>Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel Dunnville Chr. School R.R. #1, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1 Phone: (905) 774-5142 Fax: (905) 774-5519 E-mail: arievon@mergetel.com</p>	<p>ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School invites applications for a definite part-time Science position for the 1998-99 school year. We are seeking a teacher who can demonstrate a love for God, for students, and for the study of science. Please send resume and letter of application to:</p> <p>Ted Harris, Principal Beacon Chr. High School 2 O'Malley Drive St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7 Fax: (905) 937-1130</p>	<p>WINDSOR, Ont.: Maranatha Chr. Academy. A position will be open due to anticipated enrolment increases. Applicants with expertise in computer assisted education and music will receive priority. If you are suitably qualified to teach Grade 3 and have a vision for Christian education please forward your resume and request application forms from:</p> <p>Wm. A. Van Dyke, Principal 939 Northwood Street Windsor, ON N9E 2B4 Phone: (519) 966-7424 Fax: (519) 966-9519 e-mail: wvan@wincom.net</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Executive Director — The Lighthouse</h2> <p>The Lighthouse Ministry is a multicultural Christian community centre in downtown Toronto, with the mission to demonstrate God's love in action. The Lighthouse invites applications for the position of Executive Director. Applicants should have strong management skills, including leadership, financial and team building abilities. Related experience in social work will be an asset.</p> <p>If you seek to serve Jesus Christ in an outreach ministry, please send your application to The Lighthouse, c/o Marius Sinclair, 245 Forman Avenue, Toronto, ON M4S 2S4 before March 31, 1998. Applicants are encouraged to contact The Lighthouse at (416) 535-6262 for a full job description.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Only candidates to be interviewed will be contacted.)</p>
<p>SMITHERS, B.C.: Due to continued growth and expansion Bulkley Valley Chr. School will need to fill the following positions for September 1998:</p> <p>Primary teachers (Grade 2 or 3) Middle School teachers (Grade 6, 7 or 8) French teacher (Grades 7 to 12)</p> <p>A French or music background would be an asset in grades 2 through 8. Please contact:</p> <p>Mr. John Bronsema, Principal Bulkley Valley Chr. School P.O. Box 3635 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 Phone: (250) 847-4238 Fax: (250) 847-3564</p>	<p>WYOMING, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School invites applications for a full-time as well as a part-time Junior Grades teacher for the 1998-99 school year. Interested individuals should forward their resumes to:</p> <p>William Hordyk, Principal Box 81 Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0 Phone: (519) 845-3112 Fax: (519) 845-3112</p>	<p>KITCHENER, Ont.: Laurentian Hills Chr. School invites applications for a possible full-time primary position for the 1998-1999 school year beginning in September. Please send your resume on or before March 28 to:</p> <p>Mr. Luke Janssen, Principal Laurentian Hills Chr. School 11 Laurentian Drive Kitchener, ON N2E 1C1</p> <p>SARNIA, Ont.: Sarnia Chr. School invites applications for a full-time position (50% resource - 50% classroom). In addition there may be possible openings at the intermediate level. Additional qualifications in French or instrumental music would be a definite asset. Please submit your applications to:</p> <p>Mr. Pete Weening, Principal Sarnia Chr. School 1273 Exmouth Street Sarnia, ON N7S 1W9 Phone: (519) 383-7750 Fax: (519) 383-6304</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Teachers Needed</h2> <p>HDCH requires two qualified teachers for September 1998. Area specialties in vocal music, French, English and/or the sciences are of particular value. Please apply prior to March 31, 1998.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hamilton District Christian High School Mr. Jim Vanderkooy, Principal 92 Glancaster Road, Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9</p>

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

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- * an enthusiastic Christian who loves God and notices His influence in your life?
- * a person who genuinely loves children and is interested in shaping them to be compassionate Christians?
- * excited about developing your skills as an excellent teacher?
- * an individual who would enjoy being part of a dynamic team of teachers?

Knox Christian School is interested in people who have those qualities. Due to increased enrolment and a maternity leave, we are interested in teachers for both the junior and primary divisions for the 1998-99 school year. Please forward your letter of application and resume to:

George Petrusma, Principal, Knox Christian School, 410 Scugog Street, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2, phone: (905) 623-5871 or fax: (905) 623-8877.

Business Opportunity

Looking for a **Diesel Equipment Mechanic** (preferably licenced), to partly or entirely buy out retiring owner of mobile truck-transport-equipment repair business (established over 15 years). Home + 5 acres available near Hwy. 401. OAC - Ideal for younger energetic reliable couple who want their own business. Present owner willing to assist up to three months if necessary. Capital investment required.

Call 1-613-392-0091 for details and appointment.

Job Opportunities

NURSERY/GREENHOUSE HELP

Wholesale nursery, growing ground covers, flowering shrubs, evergreens, flowering vines and perennial flowers will be hiring additional staff for spring. Employment is needed in potting, tagging, shipping, tying and propagation. Work involves both being inside and outside. **Full-time and seasonal employment.** Wages and positions commensurate with experience. Resumes may be dropped off at Willowbrook Nurseries Inc., 1000 Balfour St., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0, attention Jane Broere.

Silvercrest Christian School

Wasaga Beach, Ont.

is seeking applications for the possible position of

PRINCIPAL

starting August 1, 1998

Silvercrest Christian School, established in 1978, is an interdenominational school offering an educational program from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

We are seeking a Principal to guide our children in a Christian atmosphere and to direct the operation of our school within both the Christian and the wider community. This position includes both teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Silvercrest Christian School is located in Wasaga Beach, a thriving community, just over an hour from Toronto.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a letter of application and a resume by **March 15, 1998**, to:

SCS Principal Search Committee
c/o Linda Haverkamp
R.R. 1, Phelpston, ON L0L 2K0
Fax: (705) 322-0060

Silvercrest Christian School is a member of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools.

Teachers

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Chr. School, a denominationally diverse community which offers Kindergarten through Grade 10, has **potential openings** in the following areas: **primary classroom; primary music; middle school classroom (grades 6-10)** with a physical education background. Please send your resume to:

Ron Donkersloot, Principal
Vancouver Christian School
3496 Mons Drive
Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6
No applications by fax, please.

Miscellaneous

By Grace Alone

The musical debut of **Christian contemporary musician Darrin Berg** has now sold thousands of copies all across North America. Darrin Berg has been featured in *Christian Courier*, *Images*, CJMR-AM 1320, CJIL (The Miracle Channel), City-TV and has performed in over 100 churches and schools across Canada.

See Darrin Berg live at *The Forum* in Cambridge, Ont., on Saturday, March 28, 1998, at 7 p.m. (1001 Lings Drive, Cambridge, Ont.). To order "By Grace Alone," send \$14.99 (plus \$3.00 for shipping) to **D. Berg Music, 70 Chavender Place, Woodbridge, ON L4L 1K5** or call (905) 264-0676.

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Available for call:

— The Council of First CRC, Drayton, Ont., recommends **Rev. Jack Vander Veer** to the churches of our denomination. Rev. Vander Veer has completed eight years on the mission field in Pakistan and will be available after May 1, 1998. He may be contacted at Mr. E. Vander Veer, 2262 Hwy. 16, Nepean, ON K2E 7A1. Phone: (613) 727-5211, Fax: (613) 727-3653.

Change in time of service:

— **Woodynook CRC**, Lacombe, Alta.: evening service now at 7 p.m.
— **Covenant CRC**, Edmonton, Alta.: services are now at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Classis meeting:

— **Classis Chatham** will meet in regular session, D.V., Tuesday, **May 12, 1998**, in the Aylmer CRC, Aylmer, Ont. All materials are due by March 30, 1998.

New address:

— Evangelist **Henry Boehm**, P.O. Box 711, Truro, NS B2N 5E5. Phone: (902) 895-5288 or 895-2146.

Support Reformed Faith Witness (RFW)

Mission Statement: *Reformed Faith Witness is a Christian ministry committed to communicate biblical perspectives on current and world events in accordance with Reformed traditions.*

Make a donation for 1998!

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a charitable organization which received tax exempt status from Revenue Canada.

Please consider making a financial gift for 1998. All contributions will be used to help *Christian Courier* and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the coupon below and we will issue an official receipt. Thank you very much!

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☐ I/we enclose a donation payable to Reformed Faith Witness. Please send receipt.

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Address: _____
City/Town: _____ Code: _____

P.S.: CC subscription and advertising payments are not tax deductible. Only amounts of \$10 or over clearly designated to Reformed Faith Witness will be officially receipted.

De Jong Enterprises Inc.

Now Hiring a Fleet Mechanic

De Jong Enterprises Inc., located just north of Norwich, Ont., is looking to hire a **full-time Fleet Mechanic**. Applicants must have a valid Class "A" Diesel License, a Class "AZ" Driving License and at least three years of maintenance experience.

Organizational skills, thoroughness and cleanliness are required. The position is paid by salary and includes a full benefit package. No shift work, daytime schedule and a clean shop. Please quote job TR0301 and send applications to:

De Jong Enterprises Inc.
P.O. Box 39, R.R. #3, Norwich, ON N0J 1P0
or may be faxed to: (519) 424-2399
Please no phone calls.

Only those scheduled for interviews will be contacted.

**Send your questions to
Peter and Marja
Confidentiality is assured.**

Classifieds

Events

40th Anniversary

Former Calvinettes and Counsellors are invited to join us for our 40th anniversary!

When? April 25, 1998, D.V.

Where? Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Listowel, Ont.

For more info. call: (519) 291-9904

"Embraced by the Light"

Conference on the Awareness and Prevention of Abuse

Date: April 18, 1998: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

a.m.: Covenant Players Drama Team

p.m.: Keynote address by Annette Dekker (marriage and family therapist)

Place: Westmount Chr. Ref. Church, 405 Drury Lane, Strathroy, Ont.

Registration fee: \$15 (includes lunch)

Pre-registration by phone requested.

Contact: Tessa Tjoelker (519) 245-0253, or MaryAnn Kingma (519) 245-0139. E-mail: jmkingma@eculink.com

40th Anniversary

The **Bethel Christian Reformed Church of Dunnville, Ont.**, hopes to celebrate their 40th anniversary as a congregation, the Lord willing, on **May 28, 1998**.

On Sunday, **May 31, 1998**, this occasion will be remembered during a special thanksgiving worship service. Former members are welcome to join us for worship on that special date. Info.: (905) 774-7285.

Christian Labour Association of Canada
Convention 98

STANDING FIRM

... prepared for change

Saturday, April 4, 1998

Business Session 10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (lunch provided)
(Registration for delegates at 10:00 a.m.)

Evening Program 6:00 - 9:30 p.m., with dinner.
(Reception at 5:00 p.m.)

For further information and tickets,
contact the nearest CLAC office,
or Susan at 905-670-7383.

Plan to attend Zion
CRC's

**Fifth Worship
Conference**

April 24 and 25, 1998

held at

Zion Christian
Reformed Church
409 Adelaide Ave. E.
Oshawa, ON L1G 2A2

Cost: \$35

(\$40 after April 14)

For more info. call (905)

436-3255 or Fax:

(905) 436-3691

or e-mail:

zioncrc@planeteeer.com

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Thursday mornings

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7:30 a.m. MT & AT

Also CJIL-TV

(The Miracle Channel)

Lethbridge, Alberta

9:30 a.m. and a repeat in evening

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Maranatha Christian Reformed Church
in Cambridge, Ont. (formerly Galt, Ont.)
invites you to celebrate their

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

on the weekend of March 27-28, 1998.

Weekend events include a special

Indonesian Fundraising Dinner

on March 27, 1998, beginning at 7 p.m.,

featuring unique anniversary displays and much entertainment.

Tickets are \$15.00 each or two for \$25.00.

Please reserve your tickets by March 20, 1998,

by calling (519) 623-0985.

All funds raised will be donated to the construction of
Maranatha's pipe organ.

We would also like to invite you to a special service to

celebrate God's faithfulness to our congregation

on March 29, 1998, at 10 a.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME!!

Men In Praise Festival — April 25, 1998

The "Crusaders" Male Choir will host the annual "Men In Praise Festival" this year. The festival will be held in the **Agincourt Pentecostal Church, Agincourt, Ont., D.V., on Saturday, April 25, 1998, at 7:30 p.m.** Seven southern-Ontario Christian male choruses will be participating, with about 350 men blending in harmony. The event is expected to be booked to capacity, so we recommend you get your tickets early. To obtain your tickets, please contact one of the male choir members you know, or phone **John Ponsen at (519) 941-7036**. You can also order tickets at this e-mail address: **jjponsen@beeline.ca**. Price of the tickets is \$10 each. To order in Toronto, call **John Hekman at (416) 223-6047**.

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

March 20-21 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents the three-act comedy "Voor Hete Vuren," 8 p.m., Dutch Canadian Hall, London, Ont. Tickets/Info.: (519) 283-6285 (#)

March 21 The Brampton/Georgetown Christian Male Choir "The Choraliers" in concert, featuring the renowned organist Chris Dawes together with Toronto's "Trillium Brass Quintet." At 8 p.m., Second CRC, Brampton, Ont. Tickets/info.: (905) 793-6158.

March 22 "An Old-Fashioned Hymn-Sing," featuring speaker and song leader Johnny Esser and the "Praise Makers." Remember the hymn-sings of the '50s and the '60s? All are welcome! At 6:30 p.m., First CRC, Exmouth & Murphy, Sarnia, Ont. Info.: (519) 336-8808.

March 22 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, 3 p.m., Central Presb. Church, Hamilton, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

March 27 WLU Early Music Ensemble performs Buxtehude cantatas, 8 p.m., Maureen Forrester Recital Hall, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

March 27 A special evening of praise in celebration of the Year of Jubilee — 50th anniversary of Maranatha CRC, St. Catharines, Ont. At 7:30 p.m. "Worship the King," is an uplifting, praise-filled experience which blends "beloved Scripture, inspiring hymns and spectacular award-winning photography" for the whole family. Presented by The Int. Bible Society. Plan to attend! Info.: (905) 934-0631.

March 28 See contemporary musician Darrin Berg live at "The Forum," Cambridge, Ont. (1001 Langs Drive). Info.: (905) 264-0676 (#)

March 30 A "Reading" by Dordt College's James C. Schaap, 8 p.m., Redeemer College Art Gallery, Ancaster, Ont.

March 30 Jonathan Oldengarm's organ graduation recital, 8 p.m., St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph, Ont. Info.: (519) 338-3214.

March 31-April 4 The RC Theatre Dept. announces its theatre tour in southern Ontario of Raymond Louter's mainstage performance "Stranger in the Land," a compilation of stories of Dutch immigrants taking place during and shortly after WWII. RC Auditorium dates: **March 31:** 8 p.m. (preview); **April 1-12:** noon (matinee); **Apr. 2, 3, 4:** 8 p.m., at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

April 4 CLAC's 40th National Convention, Days Inn, Airport Rd., Mississauga, Ont. Theme: "Standing Firm... Prepared for Change." Day-time session 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Evening banquet at 5 p.m., with featured speaker John Sutherland, professor at B.C.'s Trinity Western University. Info./tickets: (905) 670-7383.

April 4 The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents the three-act comedy "Voor Hete Vuren," 8 p.m., Heritage Christian School, Jordan, Ont. Tickets/Info.: (519) 283-6285 (#)

April 4 Spring concert by the OCMA (Leendert Kooij, director), 8 p.m., King St. United Church, Trenton, Ont. Info.: (613) 392-3020 (#).

April 12 "Nederlandse Paaszangdienst," 7:30 p.m., Emmanuel Ref. Church, 170 Clarke St. N., Woodstock, Ont. (#)

News

Quaker scholar says Christian scientists must make a practical difference

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — Dr. Ursula Franklin, distinguished scientist and citizen, told an interested audience at the Institute for Christian Studies recently that often the only public testimony to your faith is what you do. "Practice is the testimony of our faith," is the nutshell way she expressed her Quaker view on how the Christian faith shows in the world.

Franklin gave the Institute's annual Christianity and Learning lectures, whose aim, said President Harry Fernhout in introducing her, is to bring ICS into an academic dialogue with a seasoned Christian scholar who works consciously as a Christian but who stands in a different Christian tradition from the reformational tradition of the Institute. Her topic was "Living and Working as a Christian in a Scientific Community and in a Technological Society."

Franklin is a companion of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Ontario. She is a senior fellow of Massey College at the University of Toronto, following her retirement as a physicist and crystallographer in the Metallurgy and Materials Science Department of the university.

Quakers show a Monday version of Christianity, she said, which needs to be consistent with Sunday worship.

Modern science pitfalls

Two variables show the difference between religious and secular worldviews: time and



Dr. Ursula Franklin

power. She stressed that Christians need to take a long view of time, not merely the length of one's life. She opposes the use of nuclear energy, for example, because we need to take responsibility for what happens to radioactive materials until they decay, but there is no way we can reach that far into the future.

Modern western science has separated knowledge from experience, Franklin stated. You no longer needed to experience a thing yourself in order to know it — you could learn from someone else's experience. This was incredibly fruitful, but also has its pitfalls.

Scientists have become socially-sanctioned fact makers,

she said. But our faith comes in when we ask who raises the questions which set the fact-makers to work, and why those particular questions are raised. Should you produce every fact someone might wish to have? Should we produce all the technology that can be produced?

It's a vital Christian responsibility for scientists to think of ways that their potential discoveries can be used, Franklin maintained. She said that when Banting and Best discovered insulin at the University of Toronto they insisted that it not be patented so that a commercial company could control its marketing and make heaps of money. She spoke of a brilliant

Scotch mathematician who, as a Quaker, resigned from his work in weather forecasting and became a high school teacher because he saw that the chief use of his discoveries were for warfare. She herself once changed her field of research so that her work would not be used by people whose views on its use were much different from hers.

Anti-personal control

A problem Christians need to be aware of with technology is that a new technology may become so dominant that it eliminates other ways of doing things. For example, the development of Automated Teller Machines by banks means that we scarcely have human contact with a personal bank teller.

The movement of technology is toward control, said Franklin, and that should bother our Christian conscience. Technology requires planning and management. Christian citizens should be very active in public planning, because that is where decisions about direction are made.

Ursula Franklin has been much involved herself in public discussions about directional issues in society and how science and technology are used. As a gifted woman scientist in a field which few women enter, she has also been active in feminist issues. Her parting comment was that we must always remember that we don't own the world, and God doesn't call us to be successful but to be faithful.

B.C. premier consults with 40 faith groups

VANCOUVER — For a second time, B.C. Premier Glen Clark has consulted with leaders of faith groups on serious issues facing the province. But some Christian leaders have been wary of meeting with Clark and question his motives.

In late February, Clark met behind closed doors with representatives of 40 faith groups, reports the *Globe and Mail*. The session started with a meditation on poverty by Anglican Archbishop David Crawley, of Kelowna, B.C. Then the religious leaders were asked to come up with proposals on how faith communities and the government can work together to respond to poverty in the



B.C. Premier Glen Clark

province.

Clark's interest in consulting faith groups has sparked some wariness, especially since several religious leaders have been highly critical of his govern-

ment's decision to extend benefits and rights to same-sex couples.

"We certainly do not want to be used, in terms of image building, on the part of the government," asserted Don Robertson, a minister at Vancouver's Shaughnessy Heights United Church. He says the premier's invitation made him feel a little uncomfortable. The United Church is dedicated to helping people who are struggling on the margins of society, he said, but "I do not think we belong in the corridors of power."

Robertson considered last year's consultation between Clark and religious leaders to be halfhearted.

New Democrat MLA Tim Stevenson, who was instrumental in organizing the meeting, said the government is sincerely looking for ways it can work together with faith communities. The religious leaders identified poverty as an issue on which they thought they could reach some agreement.

Currently, 16 per cent of men in B.C. are considered to be living in poverty, compared to 10 per cent in 1980, according to government information. The proportion of women in poverty has risen only slightly, to 18 per cent from 16 per cent in 1980. But children in B.C. are the hardest hit, with 21 per cent now living below the poverty line.

News Digest

Deaf Poets Society draws big crowds

SEATTLE — A group of performers called the Deaf Poets Society attracts standing-room-only crowds at Seattle's Blue Moon Tavern. Once a month, the club features a "spoken-word night," but performances by the Deaf Poets Society are not spoken but signed. However, there is usually an interpreter at a microphone for the "sign-impaired," reports the *Toronto Star*.

Instead of applauding, audience members usually throw up their arms and wave their hands back and forth, which is the way to applaud in sign language.

Feeding starving deer

FREDERICTON, N.B. (CP) — Some people like to feed birds in winter, but Neville Crabbe prefers to feed deer. New Brunswick has had a long, hard winter, and deep snows and freezing rain have taken a toll on the deer population.

Some biologists caution against interfering with cycles of famine that naturally thin out herds of deer. But Crabbe scoffs at the experts. "Don't forget, they were supposed to bring our fish back 20 years ago, and we don't have no salmon or no trout. I think we've got an argument."

Crabbe frequently hauls hay into the woods near his camp on the scenic Tobique River, and cuts down cedar boughs and saplings for deer to eat.

Christian attends Iranian seminary

QOM, Iran — A 38-year-old Canadian Mennonite has made history by becoming the first Christian ever permitted to take classes at a seminary in Qom, Iran. Mr. Hange has agreed to spend three years studying at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, named after the Ayatollah Khomeini.

"A dialogue of civilizations is better than a clash of civilizations," Hange told the *Globe and Mail* recently. "I hope our presence will transform perceptions of the other side. It will build relationships over time. It will help Muslims understand that Christians are faithful and interested in peace."

Church

Evangelical Fellowship launches Internet forum to discuss missionary future

(BURNABY, B.C.) — As Christian missionary outreach heads into the next millennium, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Task Force for Global Mission is launching a major Internet initiative that will give Canadian Christians a place in cyberspace to map out the future of Canadian missionary outreach.

"The world is so interconnected because of the new Internet and e-mail technologies that there's a need for mission-minded Canadians to use these technologies to develop effective new strategies for evangelizing the world," says Geoff Tunnicliffe, the task force's chair.

Tunnicliffe said that six new discussion forums on the task force's Internet site (www.globalmission.org) will provide Canadian evangelicals with the opportunity to join "an ongoing poll" of issues vital to the future of world evangelism.

"Anyone with access to the Internet can sign up to join the discussion on various mission-related topics," said Tunnicliffe.

The sharing of ideas, resources and links to other mission-related Internet sites will allow Internet users to have a say in the future of mission from a uniquely Canadian perspective.

The six discussion forums are:

- developing leaders;
- mobilizing the local church;
- training missionaries;
- implementing partnerships;
- applying theology;
- redefining the Western mission agency.

Three discussion forums — mobilizing the local church; implementing partnerships; training missionaries — are now online. The other three will be launched in the next few weeks.

People who don't have access to the Internet but can get e-mail from another source (i.e., from their church) can register to get all the postings from the discussion forums sent to them automatically by contacting the task force at (604) 438-0058 or by e-mailing the task force's Webmaster at markorr@globalmission.org.

The Bible League a leader in placing Chinese Scriptures

SOUTH HOLLAND, Ill. (TBL) — "The Bible League's contacts have by no means abandoned their work of delivering Scriptures since the Hong Kong takeover last year," asserts Rev. Andrew Harbert, The Bible League's Director of China/Indochina Ministries. "In fact, we intend to place an increased number of Bibles with Chinese believers during 1998."

Although some ministers have suffered — including a dramatic drop in Bible couriers willing to work from Hong Kong — since the transition became effective July 1, 1997, The Bible League continues its Scripture placement and training ministry without any negative repercussions following the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule. Much of the advance negative publicity has so far proven unfounded.

The Bible League provides an average of 3,000 Bibles per day in China. Bibles are legally printed within mainland China, but are available primarily to

Christians in churches officially registered with the government. The supply does not even begin to provide enough Scriptures for China's booming "underground" house church movement.

Largest Bible provider

Known to be the largest provider of Bibles and study materials for house church members (who possibly number up to 50 million), The Bible League partners with Chinese nationals and visitors to personally carry Bibles into China each day. It is not illegal to do this, but government officials act upon their own regulations with great inconsistency.

Bibles discovered without a custom declaration are often held at entry until the courier returns for departure, but they are not confiscated. Randomly enforced regulations often peg Bible couriers and recipients as common criminals, however.

Although Hong Kong is the most cost-effective distribution centre, The Bible League is

Chapter & Verse



● Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

A woman was working in her flower garden under the intense scrutiny of her four-year-old neighbor. They got into a conversation together and the young girl suddenly gave out this startling revelation: "When I grow up I'm going to marry Danny!" Danny was a six-year-old boy living in the house just down the street.

The woman was curious. "Why are you going to marry Danny?" she asked.

"I have to," said the little one. "I'm not allowed to cross the street to where the other boys live!"

Wedding

She makes marriage sound so simple! Locate the closest partner, and then just stick together!

It's not like that though, is it? *Finding* the right partner is work enough for most of us. *Staying* together is a much bigger deal. Allison and Gary (not their real names) were just one of the couples who showed the stress of marriage in my attempts, over the years, to help people stick together.

They were high school sweethearts, and obviously in love when they first came to talk with me about marriage. Their backgrounds were similar, and they had dated for over five years, so they knew each other well.

We spent six sessions together in marriage preparation, talking, among other things, about the "Big 3": money, communication and time commitments. They seemed to have a good handle on how their relationship would unfold.

The wedding was beautiful. It came off with only one slight hitch — the photographer was absolutely certain that she would capture every important moment, so when her camera ran out of film just as the two were reciting their vows, she came up to the front and intruded, asking them to stop until she could change the roll! At that point they were flustered enough, and I was dumbfounded enough, to stop the action. I never let that happen again during a wedding ceremony!

Still the celebration was magnificent. Both families agreed together that Allison and Gary were off to a great start.

Marriage

Three years later Allison and Gary made an appointment with me. Things were a bit rocky. Both were faithful to each other, yet each had begun to resent the time the other was spending on outside interests. Gary was into cars and racing; Allison delighted in clothes and work

A marriage made in heaven

"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." (James 4:4).

and friends.

There was a bristling of the air when they talked. Something wasn't right, and they knew it. Allison's mom wanted them to talk with me, since she knew that marriage was for life. They weren't as certain, and both hinted that they might be ready to pack it in.

A year later they were separated. The house was sold. Gary took an apartment and Allison moved back in with her parents. The next year they got a divorce.

Commitment

What happened?

When I talked with Allison about it all, she said something very interesting. She said she always felt as if they were listening to different music. Gary had the rumbling beat and twang of Country in him, and she moved to the provocative drive of Rhythm & Blues. It wasn't that they particularly liked those two styles of music; rather, said Allison, it was a sense that each of them was responding to a different note or melody or beat in life. They couldn't get it together.

Eventually both Allison and Gary would move in with other people. Neither married again. Their one attempt at finding "the right one" convinced them it would never happen again.

It wouldn't take very much to change the names and tell the story of Christians who "left their first love" with Jesus. Marriage is a lot like Christianity, and Christianity a lot like a marriage, just as Paul put it in Ephesians 5.

Some marriages go down in a blaze of adultery. So do some testimonies of Christian faith. Most, however, slip away through failed friendships. The bursts of passionate love and emotional testimony slide away as people forget to live together. George Santayana put it this way: *He liked to walk alone; she liked to walk alone. So they got married and walked alone together. In the end, that is a recipe for disaster.*

We all need to choose our friends wisely. If we want our marriage to last, we need the glue of friendship to make it happen. So, says James, in our religion. Don't flirt with too many "best friends" in this world if you want to stay out of divorce court on Judgment Day.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Mich.

researching and developing additional routes of entry to better supply the enormous demand for Scriptures. Church leaders also request further training and church planting assistance.

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